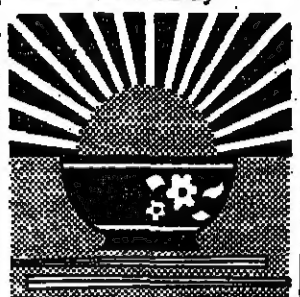


THE TIMES Tomorrow

Musical chez
Peter Hall on Mozart's home on the South Downs

Bed and board
Four posters, stately home, Japanese food... Roy Strong's ingredients for the Perfect Day



Feet into miles
Pat Butcher and David Powell preview the 21,000-strong London Marathon - the greatest marathon ever staged

Irishize
Who's Irish when it comes to choosing top Irish authors?

Rolls-Royce to get £60m aid

The Government is to inject £60m of public money into the state-owned Rolls-Royce company to help with Britain's participation in the five-nation V2500 aero-engine project. The aid will be repaid as a levy on sales.

Britain starts air fare war

Britain is starting an air fare price war in the EEC by surrendering its right to interfere in the fixing of rates for flights within the Community. Fares between London and Amsterdam have already been cut by two-thirds.

Rail threat

Railway unions are to announce plans today for disruption of services over a pay dispute. The first action will begin in two weeks unless a compromise is found.

Tax scare lifted

The Government in a Commons statement quashed persistent rumours that it was about to end tax relief on lump sum payments from pension funds, taken on retirement.

WPC verdict

WPC Yvonne Fletcher was unlawfully killed by a bullet fired from a window of the Libyan People's Bureau, an inquest decided.

Inquest, back page

Reuters trustees

The trustees responsible for keeping Reuters independent when the news and business information agency goes public next month, have been named.

Page 19

Pound falls

The pound touched another low against the dollar, falling 1.5 cents to \$1.3750 before recovering slightly to close 50 points down at \$1.3850.

Page 19

Spring break

The House of Commons will rise for the spring adjournment on Friday, May 25 and return on Monday, June 4. The House of Lords rises on May 24.

Parliamentary report, page 4

Agostinho dies

Joaquim Agostinho, the Portuguese cyclist, has died from head injuries 10 days after crashing during the Tour of Algarve race.

Leader, page 17
Letters: On vocational training, from Sir Kenneth Corfield; Olympics, from Mr R J Kelly; African self-help, by Dr A. Dickson.

Leading articles: Interest rates; Central America; Danny the Red.

Features, pages 12, 13, 16
The GLC's dignified death pangs; Mending fences with Iraq; David Watt on the realities behind the New Ireland Forum report; Spectrum: the Chieftains, 21 years of classical pop; Friday Page: Kidnapping, the family way.

Obituary, page 18
Professor T W Thacker, Mr John Chancellor, Miss E Virginia Williams.

Classified, page 23 and 28 to 30
Your own business; motoring.

Home News 2-5
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Crossword 16
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Events 18

Police preparing clampdown on pit violence

● Police in Derbyshire are considering putting a limit on numbers picketing outside pits in the county because of a "dramatic change" in miners' attitudes
● Miners' leaders are expected to ask transport unions for sympathy action in support of the nine-week-old pit strike
● Police halted busloads of pit pickets on way to Ravenscraig and charged 292 with obstruction
● Violent incidents include an attempt by pickets to overturn a coach taking 20 NCB office staff, mostly women, to work

By Craig Seton

Derbyshire police are considering limiting the numbers of striking miners picketing pits and may adopt the policy of stopping flying pickets on the road to counter a "dramatic change" in the attitude of miners involved in the dispute.

Mr Alfred Parish, Chief Constable of Derbyshire, indicating a new hardline approach by his force, said that he was not prepared to allow "intimidation by numbers" or the act of violence and sabotage which had increased in the area in the last few days.

Yesterday, as the miners' strike neared the end of its ninth week, there was further evidence suggesting that at least some striking miners are now adopting increasingly desperate measures.

At Blidworth Colliery, Nottinghamshire, the National Coal Board reported that striking miners, mainly from outside the coalfield, had adopted the tactic of moving away from the pit entrance to picket the homes of miners leaving for work, subjecting them to verbal abuse.

Nineteen pickets were arrested.

at Ollerton Colliery, near Mansfield, where pickets are now reported to patrol the streets in the early hours watching for house lights being switched on to identify working miners.

Mr Parrish's remarks followed two days in which a number of serious incidents led police to reconsider their tactics.

In one case, a coach taking 20 clerical staff - mainly women - to an NCB office at Duchmanston, Derbyshire, was stopped, apparently by pickets in their cars, and stones were thrown through the windows, slightly injuring several occupants. An attempt was then made to overturn the coach before its driver managed to escape with his bus. Mr Parrish said that the women inside had been terrified.

Mr Parrish said that pickets arrested in north Derbyshire so far were Derbyshire miners rather than outsiders. Until now, the force had not, as a matter of policy, tried to prevent miners legally picketing or tried to prevent free movement.

But when almost 5,000 pickets could turn up at a colliery, he was "not prepared to allow intimidation by numbers of that kind".

"What I am saying is that if there is clear intelligence or evidence of growing number of pickets which we believe will lead to a breach of the peace at NCB pits and property, we will try and prevent it by turning people away."

He added that NCB premises in isolated areas had been attacked in the night and equipment damaged. Police were doing everything they could to prevent such acts but it was difficult.

Asked what Derbyshire police would do if miners on their way to picket a colliery were asked to turn back, and refused, he said: "Let us wait and see."

It is understood the change in tactics Derbyshire police have in mind would be to stop miners making their way to a local pit if it is considered there are already enough present.

Sympathy call, page 2

292 charged at Ravenscraig

From Our Correspondent, Glasgow

About 292 miners' pickets were charged with obstruction yesterday after eight buses carrying them to the Ravenscraig steel works at Motherwell were intercepted by Strathclyde police.

The miners, from Fyfe, were stopped on the A80 near Stepps. They disembarked, sat down and linked arms, blocking the road. Police appeals for them to move were ignored and six busloads were then arrested.

They were taken to police stations in Glasgow and charged. A report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

More than 130 lorries in five convoys went into Ravenscraig unchallenged yesterday. There was a picket of only 30 miners, some from the Durham coalfield, and they were outnumbered three to one by police.

Mr Rory Nicholson, Strathclyde's assistant chief constable, defended police tactics and rejected accusations that they were infringing civil liberties by stopping the buses.

Ravenscraig management last night offered to halt the lorry convoys if miners would guarantee at least two coal trains a day. Tugboat crews on the Clyde have voted to black out and coal ships carrying supplies for Ravenscraig.

In Nottinghamshire, 35 arrests were made on picket lines as more than 3,500 pickets gathered at the still-working pits. More than 2,500 were at Bevercotes colliery, near Retford.

The Prime Minister yesterday condemned the violence between pickets and police at the Ravenscraig steel works and the Hunterston terminal on the Clyde.

During sharp Commons exchanges on the strike Mrs Margaret Thatcher was accused by Mr Tony Benn, Labour MP for Chesterfield, of trying to starve the miners into accepting pit closures.

Parliamentary Report, page 4

Bureau gun link with dead Libyan

By Our Political Correspondent

Ministers confirmed last night that forensic scientists may have found a link between one of the guns found in the Libyan People's Bureau and the assassination of a Libyan citizen in Britain some time ago.

Mr Max Madden, Labour MP for Bradford, West, yesterday raised the point during Commons questions to the Prime Minister, but Mrs Thatcher failed to respond to the specific suggestion.

Labour Weekly, the party newspaper, also carried a front page report by Mr Ken Hyder, a journalist who has specialised in Scotland Yard leaks, which said that the evidence linking the bureau gun with a previous killing had been classified secret by the Home Office.

He also said that some of the seven weapons found by the police had been traced to a British arms dealer and added: "Many police officers are privately bitter over the way pressure was exerted on them during the siege which ended with the colleague's murder out of the country."

Mr Madden said last night that the new evidence, taken together with a Central Television programme on covert operations from the South African Embassy, emphasised the need for an independent inquiry into unacceptable diplomatic activities.

Mrs Thatcher rejected the Commons requests for inquiries.

Inquest verdict, back page

No-one dared tell Foot to resign

By Anthony Bevins, Political Correspondent

A member of the Shadow Cabinet said last night that Mr Michael Foot had not been asked to quit the Labour leadership before the last election because no one of enough standing could be found "to deliver the black spot".

Mr Foot says in his forthcoming book about the election, *Another Heart and Other Pulses*, that he had rejected the thought of resignation before the General Election as cowardly and futile.

He argues that resignation would have been regarded as complete capitulation to the Tory press and even if Mr Denis Healey had taken over, the Labour campaign would have been dogged by questions about Mr Healey's chances in a conference leadership ballot which would have taken place within four months of the General Election.

Mr Foot also points out that only two Labour MPs told him to his face that he should not be leading the party - Mr Jeff Rooker, who made the point in November 1982, and Mr Gerald Kaufman, who raised the matter during the election campaign a year ago.

One member of the Shadow Cabinet who was engaged in at least one of the secret conspiracies to resolve "the leadership problem" said last night: "There was a moment when it might have been possible to have raised it with Michael, but the Darlingston result and *The Times* speculation about his leadership made it impossible."

A Shadow Cabinet colleague would also have been fully aware of closed-door discussions said that the parliamentary party could not have moved against Mr Foot because they would have been accused of being right-wing reactionaries moving against a truly socialist leader.

"The trade unions were wringing their hands about the leadership, but no coalition could be found to deliver the black spot."

"There was no consensus; no one was willing to act; we all talked about it incessantly, but it would have been futile to have gone along a group of MPs with no real power or authority behind it. What was needed was a group from the TUC or the national executive."

He added that what had particularly upset him at the time was the outright disloyalty of those close to Mr Foot. "Some of Michael's best friends bear the heaviest responsibility for what happened."

Mr Foot: Rejected idea of resignation

Debenhams stores but Mr Thornton said his service would provide only advice and not mortgages.

Trials for both schemes will start in four stores within two months and if successful will be expanded to take a much bigger slice of the annual £50 billion a year house selling market.

Debenhams has 68 department stores which could offer the new service.

Debenhams sees its move into property as a logical extension of its growing financial services through its Wellbeck Finance business.

Debenhams selling expertise was greater than the average estate agent, Mr Thornton

believed, and would use computer services more efficiently than the limited schemes produced so far.

More than 200 solicitors are to set up their own building society, despite objections from a Law Society working party.

The scheme is, however, supported by a second working party, which sees the move into estate agency as the best way to combat the likely loss of the profession's monopoly on conveyancing.

The scheme, says the second working party, could be the profession's best chance to avoid "A serious and irreversible loss of income."

Tempos, page 20



Olympic appeal: Models in London yesterday showing off the outfits to be worn by the British team at the opening ceremony of the Games in Los Angeles in July

Fears grow for 1988 Olympic Games

From Richard Owen, Moscow

Diplomats said here yesterday that if efforts to persuade the Russians to take part in the Los Angeles Olympic Games fail during the next few weeks, Moscow may well boycott the next Olympiad in South Korea in four years time, spelling doom for the modern Olympic movement.

East Germany yesterday followed the Soviet and Bulgarian lead and pulled out of the Los Angeles Games. It said that the security of the participants had not been guaranteed and the "honour, dignity and life" of East German athletes had to be protected.

Sources here said Soviet intentions would become clearer when President Kim Il Sung of North Korea visits Moscow later this month. He will follow Herr Hans Dietrich Genscher, the West German Foreign Minister, who has said he hopes to persuade the Soviet leadership to retract its decision not to go to Los Angeles before the June 2 deadline.

Señor Juan Antonio Samaranch, the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said yesterday he hoped to meet President Chernenko in the near future in Moscow. Señor Samaranch said he would be taking a letter from President Reagan with him to Moscow. He described the letter as "very very important" and said it contained "many reassurances".

Two other senior Olympic officials are expected in Moscow today to begin last-ditch negotiations. They are to meet Mr Marat Gramov, the chairman of the Soviet Olympic Committee, which announced on Tuesday that conditions in Los Angeles made it "impossible for the Soviet Union to participate".

Loss to Sport: East Germany's failure to appear in Los Angeles would have a devastating effect on athletics and swimming. In recent years, the East German sprinters and swimmers have been virtually unbeatable (Our Sports Staff writes).

Karamanlis offer, page 6

Journalists back Express editor

By Robin Young

The resignation of the editor of the *Daily Express*, Sir Larry Lamb, remained inoperative yesterday. Journalists on the paper voted overwhelmingly to support him against pressure from the print union Sogat 82 to allow Mr Arthur Scargill right of reply to a three-page attack which the *Express* carried on Wednesday.

In the House of Commons, the Prime Minister also rallied to Sir Larry's cause, though the *Express's* proprietor Lord Matthews, had threatened to overrule him.

Mrs Margaret Thatcher said the press freedom "will soon be lost threats to stop production succeed in obtaining space in newspapers for the propagation of particular points of view".

Leading figures in the Labour Party, by contrast, were delighted by Lord Matthews' apparent willingness to grant a right of reply. They hoped this might curb the enthusiasm of national newspaper editors for attacks on trade union figures.

The 2,000-word reply by the miners' leader arrived at the *Express* office during the day, but it remained unclear last night whether it would be printed in this morning's newspaper. If not it is likely to appear tomorrow.

Lord Matthews, who refused all day to comment, was reported to be unhappy with its length and vituperative language.

Sir Larry, whose offer to resign remained unaccepted, also had no comment. The editing of the paper was in the hands of his deputy, Mr Leith McGrandle.

A crowded meeting of the *Daily Express* chapel (office branch) of the National Union of Journalists voted overwhelmingly to refuse to process Mr Scargill's article until Mr William Keys, general secretary of Sogat 82, withdraws his threat to close the paper.

Sogat leaders at the *Express* last night regretted the journalists' resolution.

Parliamentary report, page 4

Market report, page 20

Spurs fans leave 13 in cells

From Ian Murray, Brussels

Most of Tottenham Hotspur's 8,000 fans left Belgium yesterday, with 13 of their number still in police custody. In a 24-hour period the invasion from North London confirmed all the worst stories about British soccer hooliganism which had been haunting the Brussels authorities and café owners since they learnt that Spurs were to play Anderlecht in the UEFA Cup final.

Tottenham Supporters had been shot dead and two others shot and wounded. Four policemen were injured - two when British fans turned over a police car and the other when arrested fans set about their escort and broke one of his legs and an arm. One Anderlecht supporter was taken to hospital with a stab wound in the back.

In total 50 policemen and 43 fans needed hospital treatment. The police operation to contain the fans will probably cost about 500,000. Some 360 riot police were deployed.

A total 141 fans were arrested. The 13 still held are accused of grievous bodily harm, possessing illegal weapons, causing wilful damage, assault, theft and "rebellion" (resisting arrest). It could be up to three months before some appear before court.

A Belgian bar owner has been charged with murdering Irish fan Brian Flanagan, aged 18, from Finsbury Park, London.

The other two fans shot were William Worley, aged 19, from Biggleswade, Bedfordshire and Paul Adamson, aged 25m from Boreham Wood, Hertfordshire.

The Prime Minister yesterday apologized for the violence and said that the Government condemned it.

Parliamentary report, page 4

Stuart Jones page 25

Fears of trouble for top US bank

By Wayne Lintott

The Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Company of Chicago, the eighth largest bank in America and one of the leading 40 in the world, was fighting a growing wave of speculation yesterday that it is in financial difficulty.

The bank was hindered in doing business on the wholesale money market and its share price dropped sharply on Wall Street.

The United States authorities issued hurried statements in an attempt to calm the markets while the bank refused to make any comment after having denied that it had applied for bankruptcy protection earlier in the week.

Continental operates throughout the world, including in London's financial markets, and employs 12,000 people. Declared assets are \$30 billion and outstanding liabilities amount to \$27 billion.

The bank has suffered heavy losses from loans to the US energy industries and last month sold its credit card business for \$734m. The senior management resigned and were quickly replaced.

On Wall Street suggestions that a consortium of foreign banks, led by Mitsubishi Bank of Japan, was mounting a rescue were quickly denied by the United States Comptroller of Currency, Mr C. Todd Combs. He also said that he was "unaware of any major changes in Continental Illinois trading operations".

Spokesmen for the bank were also unprepared to discuss whether Continental had approached the Federal Reserve Board for assistance.

A leading dealer on the New York money markets told *The Times*: "Some banks are not taking Continental Illinois's paper at the moment."

This usually signals that the bank's status is in doubt in the vital inter-bank money markets.

However, leading American banking analysts were quick to defend the bank. Mr Lawrence Fuller, analyst at leading brokers Drexel Burnham Lambert, said: "The rumours are unfounded. The bank has some problems with non-performing loans. But even if earnings are not meaningful, the bank has enormous hidden assets that they can convert if necessary."

At the end of 1983 the bank had to increase its reserves for potential losses to \$290m. But US officials stressed that Continental's capital ratio - the major indication of its underlying strength - was still 5.8 per cent, an acceptable figure compared with other leading US banks.

However, at the end of the first quarter of this year the bank was holding \$1.6 billion in what the Americans term non-performing loans, loans that are not being repaid or are awaiting some form of rescheduling.

Market report, page 20

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BBC musician contest accused of ruining young players' lives

By Colin Hughes

The rising dominance of music competitions over the lives of young artists is ruining the futures of Britain's most promising young talents and threatening the development of musical excellence, a report to be published next month says.

A working party of the European Young Musicians' Association, which has studied the hundreds of competitions which have burgeoned in recent years, singled out the BBC's popular Young Musician of the Year contest for particular criticism, calling it a "degrading musical equivalent of the Miss World contest".

Miss Anna Markland, winner of the BBC's competition 1982, last night countered the criticism by saying that she had found "nothing but good came of it".

Since winning she has obtained 40 to 50 engagements a season, won a place to start studying for a degree at Worcester College, Oxford University from October.

Many of the semi-finalists and runners-up also received offers, so one person's victory was not necessarily at the expense of others, she said.

Mr Roy Tipping, senior producer of Young Musician of the Year, who has worked on all four competitions since 1978 and sat on the working party as an observer, said he did not

believe the association's fears were well founded.

Many young players who had lost in early stages of previous competition had now become young professionals, and he was confident that the 2,500 young people who had taken part in the past six years had found it "positive and rewarding".

The association says that competitions convert musical performance into a gladiatorial sport, cultivating artificial "stars" who pursue a "jet-propelled" series of engagements. Musical sensitivity is sacrificed for physical toughness and inexperienced performers are overwhelmed by the pressure.

"The unceasing search for new sensations greatly increases the number of young musicians who are going to suffer the personal and professional disaster of instant glory followed by total oblivion," the report says.

Brilliant musicians who need time to develop and choose not to concentrate on technical accuracy, which is all competitions can judge, are left by the wayside. Most musicians dislike competing, but "side by side with the mushrooming of competitions has gone the elimination of other avenues into the profession".

The working party, composed of 15 professional musicians and teachers, who have judged competitions, accepts that the

motives of most competition organizers is to stimulate and encourage young people.

They conclude, however, "Competition in music is not only inappropriate but can also be exceedingly harmful and therefore, ideally, should play no part in musical life."

Scorn is reserved for the BBC competition, where the working party describes the "futile impossibility" of picking a winner out of the four finalists, who are playing different types of music on different instruments.

Independent television's *Fanfare*, the National Festival of Music for Youth, and the Chamber Music Competition for Schools are credited with encouraging participation among performers, but even they incorporate solo combat.

The association prefers contests modelled on the European Broadcasting Union's string quartet competition, or Yehudi Menuhin's Paris violin competition, which award equal prizes to every musician who produces an excellent performance.

Competitions for young musicians should offer prizes such as master classes, summer schools, help to buy instruments and fund study-time.

Music Competitions: A Report - EFTA, Alfred Russell, Baron's Keep, Glendon Road, London, W14 2EL.



Bouncing back: Andrew Hardwick, aged two, in playful mood after his liver transplant at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge. Andrew, who had his operation last week, is now getting up to mischief, his parents said yesterday. "It shows he is really on the mend and we just love it", his father, Mr Ron Hardwick, of Shafton, near Barnsley, South Yorkshire, said. Andrew is now so well that doctors have allowed him to eat bacon and eggs.

Kicking charge policeman 'protecting himself'

From Our Correspondent, Preston

A young Liverpool police constable accused of kicking a demonstrator in the face said yesterday that he was trying to push the man out of the way to protect himself.

PC Karl Kneale, who denies assault, told a jury at Preston Crown Court that he did not kick Michael O'Brien in the face and said in a statement that he felt he had been "tried and convicted" in a photograph published in most national newspapers.

Mr Michael Wolfe, for the

prosecution, has said that PC Kneale was photographed the instant he delivered a deliberate kick to Mr O'Brien during a "Free Dennis Kelly" demonstration outside Walton Prison.

PC Kneale, aged 23, of Tynerville Road, Walton, said that, as a coach carrying Kelly, a convicted killer, came out of prison, demonstrators were making "desperate attempts" to throw themselves in his path.

After he had shouted at them to get off the road, Mr O'Brien deliberately punched him

Blow struck by accident, accused PC says

From Our Correspondent, Preston

Police Constable Brian Renton, who is accused of blinding Mr Barry Cartell, said yesterday he hit him by accident.

He told Southwark Crown Court that the 6ft 7in businessman struck out while being searched at Islington police station, north London.

PC Renton said: "He pushed me away and as I started to move towards him I saw his fist coming towards me. I instinctively took my head out of the way and my right hand shot up."

"I heard a smack and realized I had struck him about the face

or head. I had not intended to. The next thing I remember was him putting his hand to his face. I saw blood streaming through his fingers. I felt terrible."

PC Renton, a former RAF boxer, said he drank six pints at a detective's leaving party but its only effect was making him "a little bit happier".

PC Renton, aged 26, of Highbury, north London, denies causing grievous bodily harm to Mr Cartell, aged 36, of Bloomsbury, central London. The trial continues today.

Private care in NHS offered to cut fees

By Nicholas Timmins

Private Patients Plan, Britain's second largest medical insurer, has revamped its subscription rates to encourage companies to cover their employees for private care in National Health Service hospitals and the less luxurious hospitals.

The change will mean that for the first time employees are likely to be asked to contribute between £55 and £200 towards the cost of their treatment under some schemes.

The move initially affects only PPP's corporate health plan, where the company pays employees' subscriptions. That involves about one-third of the one million people covered by PPP and is the fastest growing sector of the market. But similar packages are on the way next year for PPP's voluntary groups and individual subscribers.

The move is one more attempt by the private medical insurers to control the increasing cost of private treatment.

Under the scheme, PPP says it has arranged cost-cutting agreements with most private hospitals. Employers can opt for one of four bands of cover from D, which covers pay beds in most NHS provincial hospitals and the lower priced provincial private hospitals, to A, which covers the most expensive private hospitals in London.

For routine operations, employees will in effect be restricted to the category of hospital chosen for cover. But for 41 "complex" procedures, including open heart surgery, hip transplants, neurosurgery and hysterectomies, employees will still be covered for treatment in any hospital.

Companies will be able to reduce their premiums by another 15 per cent by stipulating that their employees will pay the first £55 in any one year for treatment in a group D hospital, up to the first £200 in A band hospitals.

Trainer lied for glory of first win

From Our Correspondent, York

A racehorse trainer told a "pack of lies" to the racing authorities for the glory of running his first winner, York Crown Court was told yesterday.

Mr Stephen Wiles said that he gave false information to the Jockey Club about a horse he knew as Flockton Grey.

He had made the false statement after being assured by its owners that the horse was a sure winner if it were entered for races. But he has said he had seen the horse only briefly when it was officially named at his yard.

It is alleged that the horse was given the false identity to provide a better coup for its owner, Kenneth Richardson, aged 47, and his racing manager, Colin Mathison, aged 46.

Mr Richardson, of Jubilee House, Hutton, near Driffield, North Humberside; Mr Mathison of Driffield, and Mr Peter Boddy, aged 39, a horse box driver, also of Driffield, deny conspiracy to defraud and to obtain property by deception.

The trial continues today.

Freeze considered on council house building

By David Walker, Social Policy Correspondent

The Government is seriously considering a total freeze on new council house building and new grants for home improvement.

Officials at the Department of the Environment and the Treasury are studying projections which show that councils in England could exceed housing cash limits by £300m in 1984-85 and that total capital over-spending could exceed £500m.

In response, ministers are likely next month or in early July to order a complete ban on councils signing new building contracts for schools and roads as well as for housing. No further home improvement grants would be made for a period of at least four months, possibly during the rest of the financial year.

Such a freeze would dismay the building industry and do-it-yourself firms.

The problem, according to returns now being made by councils, is that many local authorities took the Prime Minister at her word when, in October 1982, she berated them

for not spending enough on capital projects. Councils approved a series of schemes, many of which are only now coming on stream, pushing up costs in the current financial year above the level the Treasury planned.

In previous years, councils' spending on housing has been buoyed up by unexpectedly large receipts from the sale of council houses to tenants. This year, however, receipts are falling and although they may turn out to be what the Treasury computed (about £1,465m in England in 1984-85) they will be insufficient to pay for the building projects now on councils' books.

A spokesman for the Association of Metropolitan Authorities said yesterday: "Two years ago councils were 'under-spending' on housing by at least £1,000m. Now it is time for the Government to return some of that money they saved."

Nearly a quarter of all tenants in Britain are now in rent arrears and at least £240m is owed in rent to local authorities.

High-speed Gatwick link opened

Gatwick airport's new, high-speed rail link with Victoria Station was formally opened yesterday. It will start public service on Monday.

Air-conditioned Gatwick Express trains will make the 30-minute journey every 15 minutes, separating airline passengers with their heavy baggage from ordinary commuters. By providing a greater speed and comfort the service is expected to double rail traffic on the route to eight million over the next decade.

Two appear on terror charges

Two Northern Ireland men appeared before Lambeth Magistrates' court, London, yesterday, on murder, explosives and firearms charges.

Thomas Quigley, aged 28, who faces 10 charges, including murder, attempted murder and causing explosions, and Paul Kavanagh, aged 28, who faces two charges of causing explosions, three of possessing firearms and one of possessing explosives, were remanded in custody until May 17.

Jack Nicholson wins libel case

Jack Nicholson, the Academy Award winning actor, won substantial libel damages in the High Court yesterday against the Sun newspaper, which had alleged that he had been arrested for drug offences.

The newspaper acknowledged that the American actor had never been arrested for any drug offence and offered an unqualified apology. It agreed to pay undisclosed damages and Mr Nicholson's costs.

£10,089 an acre for farmland

The price of agricultural land in Britain has reached a record level with the sale of 30.7 acres on the Lincolnshire coast for £310,000, an average of £10,089 per acre.

The land was part of the 310-acre Hall Farm and Country House at Wrangle, near Boston.

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Mr H Newsagent aged 43 plans to retire at 65. He intends to save £80 a month gross (which will cost him only £56 after tax relief at 30%).



Mr G Builder aged 48. Wanting to retire at 65, he can afford to save £150 gross a month, having paid off his mortgage (After tax relief at 30% it will cost only £75 per month).

SUN ALLIANCE INSURANCE GROUP

The figures shown in the above examples are projected benefits assuming current bonus and annuity rates. Future bonuses depend on profits yet to be earned and so cannot be guaranteed. Annuity rates will depend mainly on interest rates prevailing when the pension is taken.

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6. Age _____
7. Occupation _____
8. Name of Broker, Agent or any _____

9. The maximum amount you may invest in your pension each month is £10. And your investment must not be more than 17½% of your earnings.
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Unemployment increasing among Oxford arts graduates

By Colin Hughes

More Oxford University arts graduates are leaving college to join the dole queue or take short-term jobs but prospects for science graduates are improving, a report by the university's Appointments Committee reveals.

The rate of unemployment among Oxford leavers stayed steady at 6.3 per cent last year, about half the national average. But the split between arts and science students widened.

Of arts and humanities students leaving last year 10.1 per cent of men and 12.8 per cent of women were unemployed or entered short-term jobs, compared with 9.8 per cent for men and 10.3 per cent for women the year before.

Science students fared better. Of men who graduated last year 6.4 per cent were unemployed or in short-term work, compared with 7.5 per cent the year before, and the same figure for women fell from 6.3 per cent of 1982 leavers to 5.8 per cent of last year's.

The committee says that Oxford students, like those from other universities, are now having to cast their net over a wider range of prospective employers, apply later, accept lower positions and consider vocational training before applying for full-time posts.

One of the sharpest and most surprising changes is in the law. Numbers choosing the uncertain future of training for the Bar rose to 44 last year and only 29 of those read law at college.

Among those choosing to become solicitors the reverse was true. Last year 136 students

began solicitor training, of which 35 had not read law at college, a fall of 50 per cent on the non-lawyers who entered the profession the previous year.

The committee says that some art graduates are being deterred by rising Law Society examination standards and the difficulty of obtaining local authority grants for the first two years.

For the first time, the committee reports large numbers of Oxford graduates failing to find places in teacher training and the numbers succeeding has fallen steadily over the past four years from 8.8 per cent to 7 per cent of first degree students. The national average is above 8 per cent.

Of the total 2,748 who graduated last year, 58 went to work for central government, including 30 in the armed services. Eight of the 24 graduates accepted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office last year were from Oxford.

Another striking shift among Oxford students is in numbers entering commerce and industry. Last year, 10.8 per cent went into industry, against 13.1 five years ago. Oxford's proportion is two-thirds the national average entering industry, because it is primarily an arts and humanities university.

Oxford still supplies the City. Of 331 graduates entering commerce last year, 25 became stockbrokers. Numbers becoming bankers, a traditional Oxford preserve, fell from 128 in 1982 to 106 last year.

Fred Astaire celebrates 85 happy years

Hollywood (AFP) - Fred Astaire, acclaimed as the world's greatest dancer by fellow artists, yesterday celebrated his eighty-fifth birthday with his wife in their Beverly Hills luxury villa.

"I never really thought about my age until I reached 80. Then everybody made a big thing of it, and people were saying 'Oh, he's one of those octogenarians...'. Well, I didn't feel any different then and I don't now," he told friends. "My health is good, I'm happy and I'm doing what I want to do, so what's all the fuss about?"

Fred Astaire is one of Hollywood's more discreet stars, refusing to accept American university honorary degrees or take part in television programmes dedicated to his career. But two years ago, after hesitating for a long time, he agreed to be honoured by the American Film Institute.

Producers still come to him with offers. He made his last film *Ghost Story* only two years ago. But one thing is certain; he will never tap dance professionally again.

The man described by the Russian choreographer Georges Balanchine, and by Rudolph Nureyev, as the world's greatest dancer says today, apparently without regret: "It is a part of my career which is over. I am an actor now."

Born Frederick Austerlitz on May 10, 1899 in Omaha,



Merry dance: Fred Astaire pictured left celebrating his 85th birthday and, right, in his heyday with Ginger Rogers.

Nebraska, he was seven years old when he started dancing.

Fred Astaire was attracted by Hollywood, and went there for a test. The verdict has become film history: "... Can't act. Slightly bald. Can dance a little."

Nevertheless, he managed to get a small part in 1933 in *Dancing Lady*, starring Joan Crawford. The same year he married Phyllis Potter and shortly afterwards made his

first film with an almost unknown dancer, Ginger Rogers.

A long line of films followed which charmed the entire world, including *Roberta*, *Top Hat*, *Follow the Fleet*, *Swing Time*, *Shall We Dance*.

The Astaire-Rogers partnership broke up in 1939, but he went on from one success to another in musical comedy films with other partners.

In all his films he played the part of an elegant dandy, with top hat, evening suit, white gloves and twirling walking stick.

Today Fred Astaire lives with his second wife, a former jockey 45 years younger than her husband, far away from the Hollywood daily showbusiness scene. As he grows older, he is less critical of his films. "I see them on television once in a while, and you know, they are pretty darned good."

Court to investigate Pinochet land deal

Santiago (Reuters) - Chile's appeal court has appointed one of its members to investigate alleged irregularities in the purchase of land for a private house by President Augusto Pinochet.

The case was referred to a plenary session of the appeals court by the Supreme Court, which last week received a petition from prominent opponents of the military government saying that General Pinochet could have broken fraud and conflict of interest laws.

For several days, senior military and government figures have paraded before television cameras offering the President their support and dismissing the charges, while he has assured them that he has done nothing wrong or unethical.

Such attempts to stifle the matter, the first scandal to touch President Pinochet personally after more than 10 years in power, have been thwarted by yesterday's court decision.

The sums involved are comparatively small, but diplomats say that the issue is potentially dangerous for the President because army officers are extremely sensitive about anything which could adversely affect the institution's image.

The most damaging aspect of the case appears to concern plots bought by the Government for road-widening next to his house. Land left over was sold to him through an intermediary at what opposition lawyers alleged was a loss to the state.

Yugoslavs go on trial for criticizing regime

From Dassa Trevisan, Belgrade

Two of the 28 Belgrade intellectuals who were arrested and subsequently released in a spectacular police raid on a political meeting in a private home last month are to be charged with alleged hostile propaganda after being rearrested on Wednesday night.

Explaining the reason for arresting Mr Miodrag Milic, a freelance film worker, and Mr Dragomir Olujic in whose flat the meeting took place, an official announcement referred to their continuing active

participation in "unauthorized political gatherings" and public debate.

The article under which the two men will be charged provides for a sentence of up to 10 years for a so-called verbal political offence. A number of Yugoslav lawyers and intellectuals recently urged the abolition of this offence. Under it verbal criticism is a criminal offence and this has sometimes been interpreted by the authorities to make the slightest critical remark a crime.

Wass attack on Tisdall jailing

By Peter Hennessy

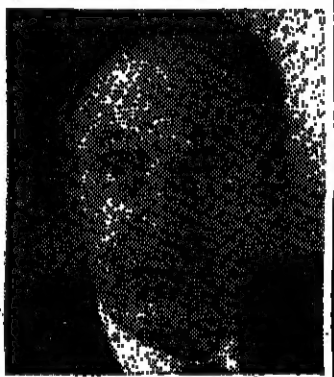
Sir Douglas Wass, former Joint Head of the Home Civil Service, today attacks the jailing of Miss Sarah Tisdall, the Foreign Office clerk sentenced to six months' imprisonment in March under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, for leaking a confidential memo about the deployment of cruise missiles to a newspaper.

In a book review published in *The Times Educational Supplement*, Sir Douglas writes: "We must be almost alone in the civilized world in invoking the criminal law to stop leaks irrespective of the nature of the injury caused or the intentions of the leaker."

"Applying the criminal law to leaks which are merely embarrassing is quite unjustified."

Sir Douglas said yesterday: "I would have sacked her summarily. But sending her to jail for six months is absurd."

In his review, Sir Douglas says "we must be careful" before denouncing people like Miss Tisdall out of hand. "The deterrent effect of a prosecution must be infinitesimal where the breach of trust by an otherwise



Sir Douglas: 'I would have sacked her summarily'.

loyal person is dictated by conscience.

Sir Douglas calls for a right of public access to official information to be established by statute. He praised the 1984 Campaign for Freedom of Information, to which he is an adviser, for having "leaned over backwards to be responsible". As a former Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, he says the campaign is too cautious about the need to keep information about the currency secret.

Protests over public bird-killing contest

Police and the RSPCA are investigating plans for a public competition in which young people will kill poultry.

The competition instructions read: "Kill and pluck one bird. If a competitor is unable to kill a bird, assistance will be given at a loss of 10 penalty points."

The competition, planned by Bedfordshire Young Farmers at an agricultural rally at Bartlesden, near Woburn, on May 19, has sections for under-16s, under-21s and seniors.

Chief Inspector Tony Sheridan, of Biggleswade police,

said inquiries would be made. He said: "To break the neck of a bird requires a knack and degree of force."

Mrs Lynn Bardill, Animal Aid, called the competition "absolutely disgusting". Mrs Barbara Barber, of Compassion in World Farming called it barbaric.

However, Mr Chris Hunt, chairman of the rally's organization committee, said entrants would have been trained by ministry-approved teachers. He said: "The killing of a bird is done in a second."

Sarah Keays 'not badgered' by Mirror man

There was a genuine public interest in the possibility that Mr Cecil Parkinson was the father of the baby Miss Sarah Keays was expecting, and two *Daily Mirror* reporters behaved properly and politely when asked her whether this was so, the Press Council said today.

However, the newspaper was not justified in following Miss Keays and a woman friend in two cars through London late at night, the council said.

The council rejected a complaint by Mr D. A. Spark, a solicitor, of The Rotynges, Rottingdean, Brighton, that Miss Keays was badgered by *Mirror* reporters, but upheld his complaint that she was improperly pursued.

Mr Spark based his complaint on the statement issued by Miss Keays and published in *The Times*. In it she said she was visited at her London home by reporters from the *Daily Mirror* "who demanded to know if it was true that I was pregnant by Mr Parkinson".

Mr Michael Molloy, editor of the *Mirror*, said in a reply to the council that a letter from him published in *The Times* contained a clear denial that the newspaper's car had rammed Miss Keays's car.

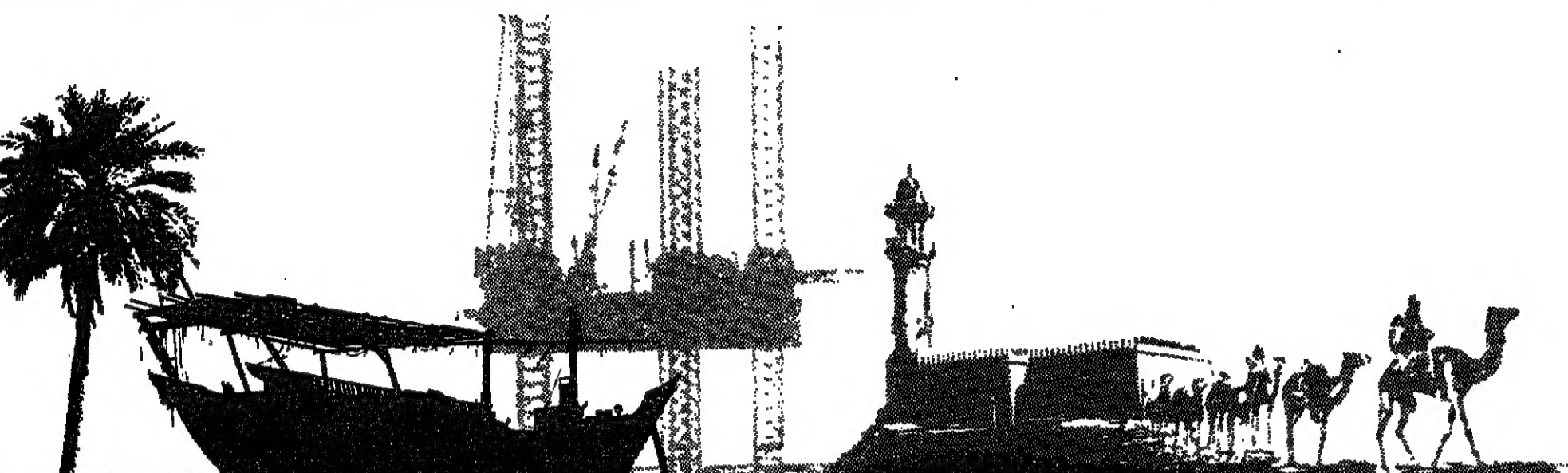
Sun distorted replies on video nasty

A report in *The Sun* which quoted a sociology lecturer as saying he would happily show a "video nasty" to his daughter aged nine distorted his replies and misleadingly omitted qualifications he made to answers, the Press Council says today.

The council upheld a complaint by Mr Martin Barker, a lecturer in sociology at Bristol Polytechnic, that the paper distorted replies which he gave when interviewed and omitted his qualifying statements, and that an explanatory statement offered by the newspaper was an inadequate remedy.

After an article by Mr Barker appeared in *New Society* Mr John Kay of *The Sun* telephoned Mr Barker and wrote a report which appeared under the headline "Let kids see nasty TV videos." It began: "A college lecturer switched on a furious row yesterday when he urged parents: 'Let your children watch video nasties'."

Mr Barker said he was asked whether he would let his children watch a video nasty? He had replied he would not refuse but would want to talk to the child.



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*Exclusive Travel Magazine, October 1984

AGAIN WE'VE BEEN VOTED

Reagan's speech on Central America wins back support

From Nicholas Ashford, Washington

President Reagan's strongly-worded broadcast on Central America on Wednesday night appears not only to have succeeded in persuading Congress finally to approve his request for increased aid to El Salvador, but also may have defused Central America as an issue in the US Presidential elections.

The President said the United States had a strategic as well as a moral interest in helping to resist the spread of Soviet - and Cuban-backed communist subversion in Central America. Unless it assisted struggling democracies such as El Salvador, the alternative would be "a communist Central America with additional communist bases on the mainland of this hemisphere, and communist subversion spreading southward and northward."

The President sought to allay widespread fears among the American public about growing US military involvement in the region. The issue was "definitely not about plans to send American troops into combat in Central America", he said.

But he made it clear that his Administration would continue to support Nicaraguan rebels, whom he referred to as "freedom fighters", in their Central Intelligence Agency - financed struggle against the left-wing Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

The President spoke shortly before the World Court in The Hague called on the United States to end its support for the Nicaraguan rebels, known as "contras".

The Sandinistas, he claimed, were carrying out "a communist reign of terror" in their country and were now trying "to export their terror to every other country in the region."

The President's Democratic critics yesterday predicted he would now get most of the money he had been seeking to bolster El Salvador's armed forces in their battle against left-wing insurgents, particularly in view of the apparent victory of

Señor José Napoleon Duarte, a moderate, in that country's presidential elections last Sunday.

The President deleted criticisms of Congress from earlier drafts of his speech in order to win bipartisan support for his aid package.

The House of Representatives had been blocking the President's request for \$62m (£44m) in immediate emergency aid for El Salvador and \$132m for fiscal 1985. But Mr Thomas O'Neill, the House Speaker, made it clear that the House would continue to oppose the requested \$21m for the CIA-backed Nicaraguan rebels.

The main reason for the President's address was to explain his Central American policy to the American public and to warn them of the dire consequences of failing to prevent the spread of "communist subversion" in the region.

MANAGUA: Señor Daniel Ortega the Nicaraguan junta leader has accused President Reagan of "maliciously distorting" both the Sandinista revolution and its foreign policy during his televised address. Señor Ortega, addressing Labour ministers at the non-aligned movement, characterized the President's appeal for understanding of his Central American policies as "desperate". He added: "To justify his request he did no more than to repeat a series of unfounded and absurd slanders against our Government."

TEGUCIGALPA: Honduras announced the recall of its ambassador to Nicaragua after Sandinista troops shot down a Honduran helicopter, killing all eight people on board. Señor Edgardo Paz Barrios, the Foreign Minister, said the recall did not represent a break in relations but could lead to one "if the Sandinista Government does not rectify its criminal and aggressive conduct against Honduras."

Leading article, page 17

Karamanlis renews Games offer

By Our Foreign Staff

President Karamanlis of Greece has renewed his offer of a permanent site for the Olympic Games in Greece in view of the crisis caused by the Soviet decision to boycott the Los Angeles games.

He said the decision had placed in serious jeopardy the future of "a unique and age old institution."

Instead of promoting ecumenical brotherhood the Olympic Games had become a factor of international tension and commercial exploitation. A permanent site for the Games would eliminate these disadvantages.

Meanwhile Vietnam has also pulled out of the Games. A Communist Party newspaper in Hanoi yesterday accused the US Government of drawing up plans to kidnap Vietnamese athletes.

Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania have not officially announced if they will join the Eastern block boycott begun in Moscow and followed up by East Berlin and Sofia.

Sources in Prague said yesterday that a "political decision" on Czechoslovakia's participation was likely to be taken in the next two days but was unlikely to be made public until a National Olympic Committee meeting on May 17.

France, Japan and the Vatican have all stepped into the Olympic dispute. M. Nelson Pailhou, President of the French Olympic Committee sent a telegram yesterday pleading with his Soviet counterpart to save the Olympic movement from a "fatal blow".



The stormy Petrel

Naturalist has bird on the brain

Suva, Fiji (Reuter) - British naturalist Dick Watling's year-long search in Fiji for a bird thought to be extinct ended when it crashed on his head.

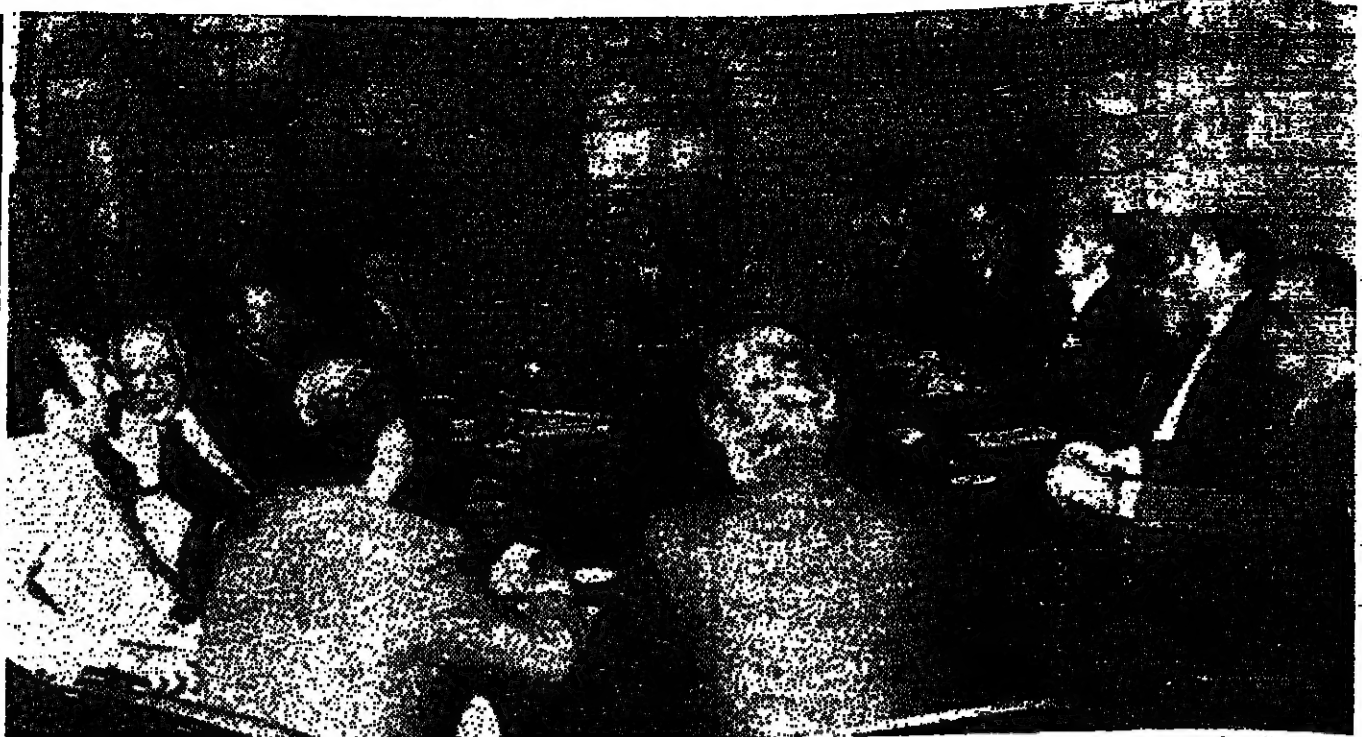
The bird, known as MacGillivray's Petrel, was recorded for the first and last time 129 years ago on the island of Gau, midway between this South Pacific state's two main islands.

A survey ship caught one specimen of the small black and brown bird which is now stuffed and on show in a London museum.

Watling said he proved last week that the bird still existed when he lured one specimen in at night from the sea using flashlights and amplified recordings.

It crashed on his head, then after examining the dazed bird he let it go. "I can't take one as a specimen until I know how many there are", said Watling, a Fiji resident.

He had made several trips to Gau sponsored by the International Council for Bird Preservation.



All the president's men: Lebanon's national unity Cabinet holding its first working session under the chairmanship of President Gemayel (centre)

Cabinet's first job to reform Lebanon army

From Our Correspondent Beirut

Lebanon's "national unity" Cabinet held its first meeting yesterday and quickly agreed to Muslim demands to reform the army. During the February fighting in west Beirut, the Army split along sectarian lines.

The Cabinet also appointed a committee of ministers under

Mr Rashid Karami, the Syrian-backed Prime Minister, to develop a political platform for presentation to the Lebanese Parliament.

"We are now marching towards peace", Mr Karami said in a statement broadcast on state radio after the Cabinet session. He also said that the ministers would meet again today, with the country's

hamstrung transportation system at the top of the agenda.

Beirut's port and airport have been closed since February 6, and all but one road between the Christian and Muslim sectors of the capital are closed. In the rest of the country, many roads are impassable.

President Gemayel, who chaired the meeting at his

summer palace in Bikfaya, 10 miles north-east of Beirut, told reporters: "The atmosphere was good."

In fact, the session marked the first time since the start of the civil war in 1975 that the country's principal "warlords" - all given ministerial posts in the new Government - gathered around a table in their own country.

Zimbabwe press tour a fiasco

From Stephen Taylor Bulawayo

The first attempt by the Zimbabwe Army to take foreign journalists into the Matabeleland South province since a harsh curfew was imposed more than three months ago was abandoned on Wednesday when the escorted group got lost in the operational zone.

The tour, led by Lieutenant-General Rex Nkhomo, had been arranged by the Government in an attempt to counter reports of widespread atrocities against the Ndebele inhabitants of the troubled province.

More than 40 correspondents left Bulawayo in an army bus just after midday having first reported to officials at 8.30. The delay was the first of a series of misfortunes to befall the tour which turned into a fiasco.

General Nkhomo had promised that journalists would be taken wherever they requested. Correspondents submitted a list of eight priority areas but the general insisted that the tour set off on an indirect route to a place named Brunap, which had been mentioned by journalists but was not on the list.

At 1.20 pm the bus with four armed escort vehicles entered the curfew area.

In the remaining hours of daylight the group saw a total of about a dozen civilians along the way. Most villages seemed deserted. The tour group did not stop to speak to anyone.

The bus then got stuck in soft sand while trying to cross a dry river bed. Two escort vehicles managed to tow it out in half an hour. At 4.40 pm the journalists agreed that the enterprise had become a shambles and asked to return directly to Bulawayo.

At 5.10 pm with the light fading the soldiers in the leading vehicle admitted that they had no maps of the area. "We do not know where we are but we are not lost" one soldier said.

Finally, after asking directions at a kraal, the bus reached Brunap at 7.05 pm to be met by General Nkhomo. The news men declined to attend a briefing on the security situation and insisted on being taken straight back to Bulawayo.

It was agreed that the tour should return to Bulawayo.

The weary party, having eaten only army rations and having drunk nothing since setting out, reached Bulawayo again at 12.45 am yesterday morning, almost 13 hours after setting out and without having visited a single site of alleged atrocities.

Shamir rebukes minister for terror speech

From Christopher Walker, Jerusalem

Mr Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli Prime Minister, has publicly dissociated himself from outspoken remarks made by a member of his Cabinet, Mr Yuval Neeman, who shocked many Israelis by claiming there had been "positive results" from the Jewish terror attack which maimed two West Bank mayors in 1980.

The argument by Mr Neeman, the Science Minister and leader of the small Techiya Party, that the attack on the elected Palestinian leaders should be treated differently from other terrorist crimes now being investigated among 25 Jewish settlers under arrest has caused a political storm that seems certain to spill over into the forthcoming election campaign.

A government communiqué stated: "The remarks of Minister Neeman were contrary to the opinions of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir which have been expressed in Cabinet

meetings and in public. The Premier's opinion is clear and well known. He rejects all attempts of the type relating to the suspects under arrest."

This did not prove sufficient for the main opposition Labour Party, which responded with its own statement expressing "astonishment" at Mr Neeman's justification for the bombing of the mayors and calling on Mr Shamir to put his reservations into effect by sacking the Science Minister.

Another call for the Minister's dismissal came from Mr Ezer Weizman, leader of the new Yehad Centre Party. The former Likud Defence Minister, who could play a vital role in determining the shape of the next Israeli Cabinet, was himself attacked in Mr Neeman's original statement. This was not delivered in the form of off-the-cuff remarks but rather as a formal communiqué distributed by the Government's press office.

Ethiopia blast confirms Libya terror links

By Henry Stanhope, Diplomatic Correspondent

The house in Addis Ababa where five Libyans and an Ethiopian died in a mystery explosion is thought to have been used as an arsenal for "liberation" movements in the Horn of Africa.

Several other people were injured and the death toll may rise, according to sources in the Ethiopian capital, who say the blast was caused by a device of some kind inside the house.

The Libyan People's Bureau (embassy) in the city refused to answer the telephone or open the door to callers, and the Ethiopian Government is unlikely to make any statement regarding the incident.

But this latest evidence of Libyan involvement in international terrorism, can serve only to put Western security forces ever more on their guard and to underline British concern for the 8,000 to 9,000 expatriates living and working in Libya itself.

A promise of support for Colonel Gaddafi came yesterday from Iran whose Foreign Minister, Mr Ali Akbar Yellayati, left Tripoli with a good-will message, according to the Iranian National News Agency (Inna).

Before he left Tehran, Mr Yellayati accused the United States and its allies of mounting extensive plots against the Gaddafi regime, a reference, it

is thought, to the reported assassination attempt on the Libyan leader on Tuesday.

Colonel Gaddafi himself has accused the US, Britain and Sudan, among others, of arming and training dissidents who are said to have taken part in Tuesday's gun battle in Tripoli. Tunisia yesterday went as far as to deny categorically any involvement in the attack.

Meanwhile in London, the Foreign Office is planning a series of meetings with companies which have employees in Libya, to work out a joint strategy of their protection.

Officials would not discuss specific proposals which are being considered. The advice being given to firms at present is to use their commercial judgment on matters which arise, while British citizens in Libya have been told that they should consider their situation carefully.

There are a number of contingency plans for helping the expatriates after the withdrawal of the British ambassador and his staff.

The Italian Embassy in Tripoli is looking after British interests meanwhile, together with two British consular officials who have remained there. But the Foreign Office points out that this arrangement can be no proper substitute for a full-scale embassy.

China and Vietnam in clashes

Kunming, China (Reuter) - Chinese frontier guards repulsed several Vietnamese raids in the past week in the southern border regions of Yunnan and Guangxi, according to the New China news agency.

A senior official in Yunnan rejected charges by Vietnam that Chinese forces were mounting their own attacks across the frontier.

Useful meeting

Peking - Britain and China had "useful and constructive talks" on the future of Hong Kong yesterday and the day before, according to a British Embassy spokesman. The next round of talks, the fifteenth, will be held on May 30-31 in Peking.

Mauroy better

Paris - M Pierre Mauroy, the French Prime Minister, who has been in hospital since May 4 suffering from an undefined lung infection, is expected to leave hospital tomorrow and resume his duties in full on Monday.

Taiwan charge

Taipei (Reuter) - A former senior Taiwanese official, Mr Pai Chi-Ho, aged 66, has been charged with forgery and corruption in connection with a loan fraud involving \$2.2m.

Dock blaze

San Francisco (AP) - A fire destroyed two piers and caused at least \$2.5m (£1.8m) on the San Francisco waterfront. The city fire chief said it was the worst blaze he had ever seen on the waterfront.

Britain jailed

Paris - David Wilson, a 42-year-old Briton, was sentenced to six years' imprisonment in Bayonne for trying to take 238lb of cannabis into France from Spain in December.

Sniper gives up

Quebec City (Reuter) - A sniper who shot and wounded two passers-by on Wednesday surrendered early yesterday, after a 34-hour siege of his house. He was named as Jean-Claude Nadeau, aged 39.

Correction

The 831 deaths in South African mines last year were 24 more than in 1982, not 230 more, as stated on May 4.

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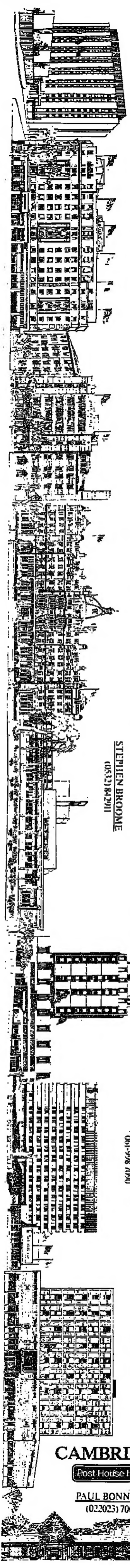
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Sri Lanka all-party talks face collapse as Tamils threaten to quit

From Michael Hamlyn
Colombo

The all-party conference launched by the Sri Lankan Government of Mr J. R. Jayewardene with a national and international flare in January appears finally to be in the throes of disintegration.

Already boycotted by the leading opposition party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party of Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the conference is now faced with a withdrawal by the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC), the two principal parties of Sri Lanka's ethnic minority.

When the conference resumed on Wednesday after a seven-week break, the Government proposed as was disclosed by *The Times* earlier, that two committees be formed. One would discuss the powers to be developed on local government bodies, the second would consider minority grievances in education, employment and language.

The TULF and the ACTC announced that they would not participate in the committees unless the conference first decided to what unit of local government the powers were to be devolved. Mr Appaiah Amirthalingam, the General Secretary of the TULF, told me yesterday that the Tamils felt betrayed and lied to by the Government. They were trying



Mr Jayewardene: warning of explosion

to return the attention of the conference to a document known in conference jargon as "Annexure C".

This represented the fruit of the discussions between the Sri Lanka and the Indian government in the latter part of last year. At the end of the process Mr Jayewardene - as reported by Mr Amirthalingam - told Mrs Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, that he would press for regional councils as the devolved authority. The TULF understood this to mean a combination of provincial councils, and on that basis were persuaded to attend the talks.

Annexure C, however, was rejected by the Buddhist clergy when the round table talks began in January. Mr Rana-singhe Premadasa, the Prime Minister, told Parliament that

the Government would never agree to a devolved authority larger than the district council, and the President himself told me: "Anything further than district councils would cause an explosion."

The Tamils now feel that they have heard all this before. "We spent four years discussing the powers that should be devolved on district councils", Mr Amirthalingam said yesterday. "Now the President thinks he can do it all again in a fortnight."

"The Government has failed to make a serious effort at a negotiated settlement", Mr Amirthalingam added.

We have negotiated with them for years, and we have made it plain that district councils will never satisfy us. We thought that because of India's intervention at least they would honour their commitment to another government, but they seem to be treating their commitment to another government as they have treated ourselves."

Mr Amirthalingam was firm. "The all-party conference as it is at present functioning is an exercise in futility," he said.

The next move by the TULF is to launch a non-violent direct action protest movement against the effects of the emergency regulations on the Tamil population of the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. The protest is expected to begin in a month's time.



Kremlin ceremony: King Juan Carlos of Spain and Queen Sofia flanked by President Chernenko and his wife Anna in Moscow yesterday.

Warm Moscow welcome for King of Spain

From Richard Owen
Moscow

In a display of ceremonial which would have done the Russian *ancien regime* proud, the Soviet leadership yesterday gave King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia of Spain a glittering welcome as they began a six-day visit marking reconciliation between Russia and Spain.

The royal couple were met at Vnukovo airport by Mr Nikolai Tikhonov, the Prime Minister, and Mr Andrei Gromyko, the Foreign Minister. The ministers' wives were also present.

together with a phalanx of Soviet officials. The Spanish King and Queen then sped in an official convoy of black limousines through flag-bedecked streets, smiling and waving at the citizens of republican, communist Russia, some of whom waved back.

The ministers' wives were also present at the Kremlin, where President Chernenko and his wife Anna Dmitrievna were waiting in front of the grand Kremlin Palace.

It is only the fourth encounter between a European mon-

arch and the heirs of the Workers' and Peasants' Revolution. King Juan Carlos is regarded as a benevolent embodiment of the principle of divine right constitutionally restricted - as he played a key role in restoring democracy after nearly four decades of fascist rule under General Franco. Memories are still strong in Soviet Russia of the Spanish Civil War, in which Moscow backed the republicans.

"Spain even has a socialist government," one official re-

marked yesterday. "Even if it is in Nato, Spain's Nato membership has been frozen pending a referendum."

Pravda yesterday praised Soviet-Spanish relations as a "bridge of co-operation" and said that positive changes had taken root since Spain and Russia established diplomatic relations seven years ago, a comparatively short period of time.

The King is accompanied by the Spanish Foreign Minister Señor Fernando Morán, who is to hold talks with Mr Gromyko.

All political reporting banned in Pakistan

Islamabad (Reuters) - Pakistani newspaper appeared yesterday without their usual sprinkling of political news and opposition statements after the military Government banned all reporting on outlawed political parties.

Newspaper editors said the Information Ministry issued the ban on Wednesday night, just after the opposition Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) condemned the Government's plan for elections by next March.

The indefinite ban covers all news and comments by or about politicians both inside and outside Pakistan, they said. Not even the names of parties which were banned in 1979 can be mentioned.

Officially Pakistan has no press censorship but editors say Information Ministry officials regularly telephone them with "advice" on which stories to suppress and which to play up.

Coverage of the opposition increased recently as politicians arrested before or during the MRD's two months of anti-government protests last autumn were freed and resumed their activities.

The 11-member MRD states that Pakistan faces a "crisis of unprecedented magnitude." It accused President Zia of treating the people with contempt and said basic human rights were denied, the Press muzzled, the judiciary crippled, the economy faltering and law and order deteriorating.

Craxi turns down P2 resignations

From John Earle
Rome

Signor Bettino Craxi, the Italian Prime Minister, yesterday rejected the resignations of his three Social Democrat ministers in a flare-up of the P2 scandal.

One of the three, Signor Pietro Longo, Minister of the Budget and Social Democrat party secretary, was on the list of more than 900 alleged members of the secret and now banned P2 masonic lodge, on interim report by Signora Tina Anselmi, the Christian Democrat chairwoman of Parliament's all-party P2 commission of inquiry, has said that the list was authentic.

The other two, Signor Franco Nicolazzi, Minister of Public Works and Signor Pierluigi Romita, Minister for the Regions, were not on the list.

Signor Longo, who has always denied membership, took them to an unexpected meeting with Signor Craxi, at the end of which it was announced that the three had expressed indignation at the "arbitrary judgements and defamatory intent" of the report and offered to resign.

Signor Craxi, a Socialist, told them that he shared the feelings behind their protest.

Signor Longo contests, the authenticity of the list.

Police use whips on pupils

From Our Own Correspondent
Johannesburg

Eighteen people were injured yesterday when police used *slamboks* (whips) to disperse crowds of pupils in a fresh outbreak of violence at schools in black townships near Pretoria. Nearly all the injured were schoolchildren, though one policeman was reported to have been hurt by a stone thrown by a demonstrator.

The incidents occurred on the third day after the reopening of two high schools closed by many weeks of disturbances and boycotts of classes by pupils who say that the Government has failed to meet their grievances. A black schoolgirl was killed in clashes with police in February.

Most of the 6,000 pupils at the two schools turned up yesterday but refused to attend classes and milled about in the schoolyards demanding the release of one of their colleagues arrested by the police. The Department of Education and Training, which handles black education, says this is a matter to be settled between the police and the pupils.

Underlying the unrest are representative councils; the abolition of the age limit regulation which means that pupils over the age of 20 can be refused reentry to school; and the abolition, or control, of corporal punishment.

Nujoma face to face with South Africa

From Michael Hornsby
Johannesburg

South Africa, pursuing the activist diplomacy which began with agreements earlier this year with Mozambique and Angola, will be involved in a complex set of negotiations with its black neighbours today and tomorrow.

Most attention is focused on Lusaka, the Zambian capital, where Dr Willie van Niekerk, South Africa's Administrator-General in Namibia, arrived yesterday for talks today with Mr Sam Nujoma, the exiled leader of Swapo, the guerrilla organization fighting for Namibia's independence.

It is the first direct encounter between South Africa and Swapo since the abortive Geneva conference of January 1981, held under United Nations auspices. Swapo has been waging a desultory, but gradually intensifying, war with South Africa for 18 years.

Mr Nujoma's position has been seriously weakened, however, by the February 16 security agreement between Angola and South Africa, which, in effect, has cut Swapo's access to Namibia from its bases in southern Angola.

Speaking in Parliament in Cape Town on Wednesday night, Mr "Pik" Botha, the South African Foreign Minister, declared: "South Africa will not stand in the way of an agreement between Swapo and the internal parties. If they wish together to form a government of national unity, they can do it because it is their country and their right to do it. Then I have an entity with which I can negotiate."

The talks in Lusaka, Mr Botha contended, have nothing to do with the South African Government as such, but were between Swapo and a senior member of the internal (ie non-violent) Namibian parties forming the so-called Multi-Party Conference, which arrived in Lusaka yesterday. It is understood that Dr Van Niekerk and either President



Mr Sam Nujoma: Ready to negotiate

Kenneth Kaunda or else a very senior Zambian official will be joint chairmen of the meeting. Apparently, however, this does not preclude Dr Van Niekerk from negotiating on South Africa's behalf.

Hitherto Mr Nujoma has always dismissed the internal parties as puppets and insisted that he will only talk to South Africa. However, he appears to have abandoned that position, and one of the internal parties, the Damara Council, as well as dissidents from another, Swanu (South West Africa National Union), have left the Multi-Party Conference to form part of his delegation.

South Africa's aim, it is becoming clear, is to try to nudge the Namibian negotiating process towards a regional settlement, outside the framework of the United Nations, for which Pretoria has an intense dislike.

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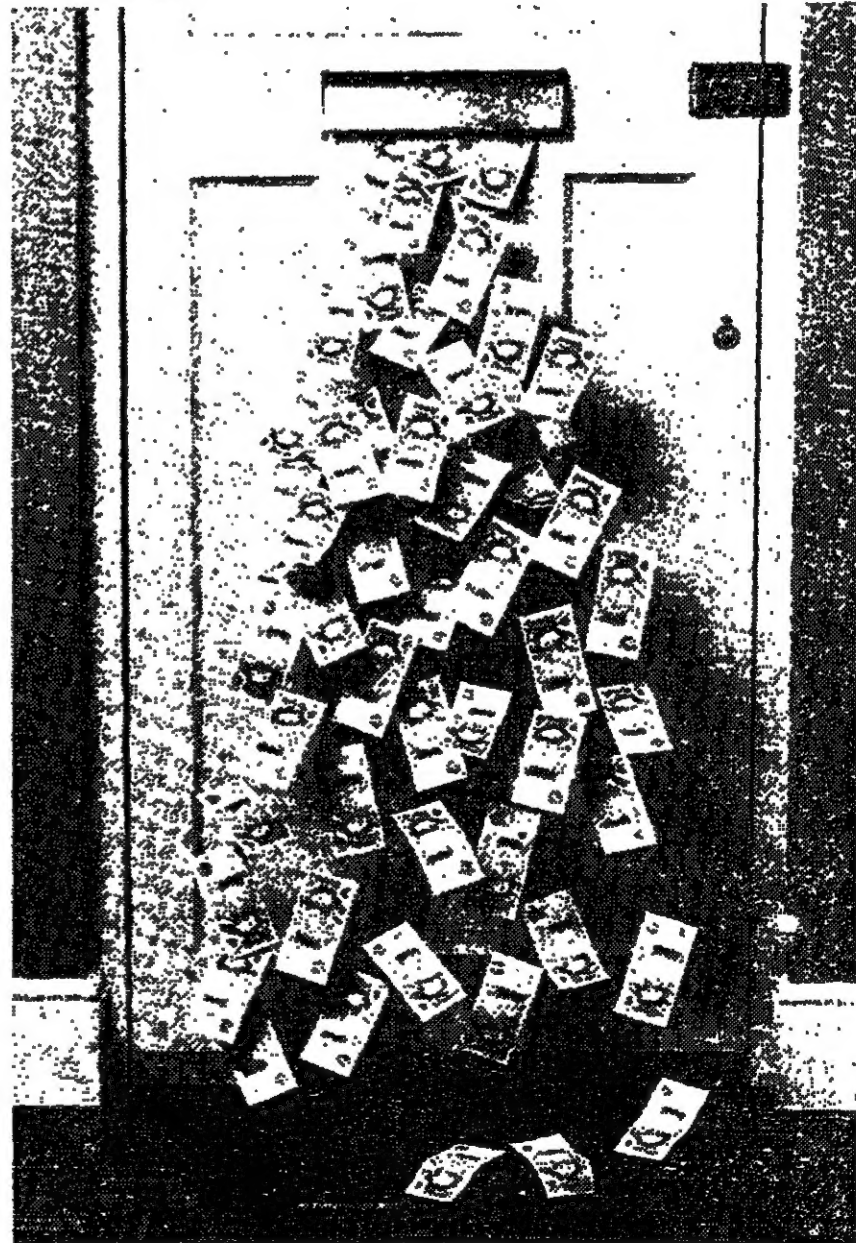
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30-34	34-38	3,400	10,000	16,600	23,200	
35-39	39-43	2,300	6,400	10,600	14,800	19,000
40-44	44-48	1,400	4,000	6,600	9,200	11,700
45-49	49-53	900	2,500	4,200	5,800	7,400
50-54	54-58	600	1,700	2,800	3,800	4,900
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Kohl's party defeats tax amnesty rebels and rallies behind him

From Michael Blyden, Bonn

Metalworkers call for strike

Frankfurt (Reuters) - About 250,000 key West German industrial workers belonging to I. G. Metall, the metalworkers union, will be called out on a regional strike starting on Monday in support of a 35-hour-week, a spokesman for the union, the country's largest, said last night.

Companies giving money to political parties had done so with a clear conscience, unaware they were breaking any tax laws, many financial supporters of the CDU had stuck by the party in difficult times in the past and the party should not leave them in the lurch; and so many people, including party treasurers, public prosecutors, politicians and businessmen, had ignored irregularities for so long that it was unfair to start prosecutions now.

The amnesty was vigorously championed by Herr Josef Strauss, the chairman of the Bavarian-based Christian Social Union and one of the main recipients of political donations, who stated bluntly, "To carry on a war you need money and ever more money, and election campaigns are a kind of war."

Opponents argued that it was a moral rather than a political issue. People's respect for the law would be damaged and the party brought into ill-repute. Herr Christopher Boehr, the chairman of the Junge Union (Young Conservatives), rejected the defence of acting in good faith, as this could also be applied to squatters and wine sweeteners.

But such arguments failed to sway the majority of delegates, who in a secret ballot gave the Government a clear mandate, though one that was considerably weaker than the party leadership might have hoped for at such a gathering, to drop the whole embarrassing issue.

Other debates were little more than a ritual endorsement of Government policies and a seal of approval on the undisputed leadership of Herr Kohl, whose reputation in his party is probably now at its height.

Herr Gerhard Stoltenberg, the Finance Minister, presented his plans for a massive tax cut of DM20,000m (£5,168m) by 1986, but warned delegates that this would have to be paid for by higher indirect taxes.

Herr Norbert Blum, the spirited Minister of Labour, challenged West Germany to seize the opportunities the computer revolution presented for new patterns of work.

Pope praises Thailand hospitality to refugees

From Neil Kelly, Bangkok

The Pope, who arrived in Bangkok yesterday for a two-day visit on the final stage of his Asian-Pacific tour, is expected to appeal to world governments to provide more aid for Indochinese refugees when he visits 18,000 of them at a camp outside Bangkok today. Many of the refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are Catholics.

During a meeting with King Bhumibol and other members of the royal family after his arrival from Papua New Guinea, the Pope praised Thailand's "generous hospitality to thousands and thousands of refugees", and said he had come to thank the King and the Thai people personally. He also spoke of Thailand's respect for man's right to religious freedom which, he told the King, "renders immense honour to your land".

The King in his response praised Catholic priests for bringing European science and technology as well as the Christian faith to Thailand.

Thailand is predominantly Buddhist but the King constitutionally is "the upholder of all religions", including Christianity.

Although Christianity has been in Thailand more than four centuries this is the first visit by a Pope. On his arrival from Port Moresby, he made his customary gesture, kneeling swiftly to kiss the ground.

After a meeting with the Supreme Patriarch, the head of Thailand's Buddhist hierarchy, the Pope, assisted by 500 Thai Catholic priests, conducted an open air Mass in the national stadium. Tens of thousands of Catholics flocked to Bangkok for the service which also included traditional Thai dancing and other displays by 2,500 children from Catholic schools and colleges.



Royal greeting: The Pope on his arrival in Thailand yesterday, accompanied by King Bhumibol and followed by Queen Sirikit.

Bangkok has never seen such security measures. More than 4,000 police and security men are deployed around the city. Outside the capital troops are on alert. A senior police officer described the Pope's visit as "an objective test of Thai security". The Thai authorities have obtained reports from foreign intelligence agencies about the whereabouts of international terrorists who might be a danger to the Pope. Some Thai newspapers last

night published unconfirmed reports that Thai police had been warned that the Venezuelan terrorist, "Carlos" was in Thailand.

The main fear of the authorities is that foreign terrorists might employ a local man to make an attack. Last week a Bangkok man masquerading as a security officer was arrested in a hospital room which the Pope will visit today.

Possible demonstrations against the Pope's visit by

Buddhist extremists, who claim that the Vatican is trying to undermine Buddhism and traditional culture in Thailand, also worry the authorities. The Prime Minister was urged to cancel the visit because of the allegations. Buddhists, however, seem to have little cause to worry about the activities of Christian churches and missionaries. After more than 400 years Christianity has fewer than 250,000 followers in a population of 50 million.

Britain still sees need for change at Unesco

From Diana Geddes, Paris

Proposals for reform of Unesco, put forward by Mr Amadou M'Bow, its General Secretary, were encouraging but did not cover all areas of concern. Mr John Gordon, the UK permanent delegate, said yesterday.

"Naturally, we would want to explore more thoroughly the detailed implications of what he is proposing, and to see to what extent they conform with our own ideas on the need for change. But we feel that his proposals, as far as they go, are encouraging and in the right direction," he said.

In his opening speech to the 51-member executive board of Unesco, lasting three hours, Mr M'Bow put forward general proposals for improving personnel selection, decentralizing the organization's activities, removing secrecy from expenditure, and improving methods of evaluating its programmes.

He did not touch on criticisms concerning the "politicization" of programmes or financial mismanagement, which are at the heart of American, British and other Western complaints about Unesco.

Britain has said that it will have to reconsider its membership unless there are "significant indications of change" by the end of the year. The US has announced that it will definitely withdraw at the end of 1984 unless radical changes are made.

That is constitutionally impossible, however, as many of the changes the US seeks would have to be approved at the next Unesco general conference, not due to take place until October 1985.

On May 17 the executive board is due to discuss the US decision to withdraw, and Britain's position.

Mrs Gandhi wins share in Sanjay's property

From Kuldip Nayyar, Delhi

The Delhi High Court ruled yesterday that Mrs Indira Gandhi was entitled to a share in property worth half a million rupees of her dead son, Mr Sanjay Gandhi.

Mrs Gandhi had claimed the share on the grounds that a Hindu mother was entitled to one third of her son's property.

She had also alleged in her petition that her daughter-in-law, Mrs Maneka Gandhi, was not allowing her to meet her grandson, Varun, Sanjay Gandhi's son. Mrs Maneka Gandhi in her reply contested her mother-in-law's claim to the property and pleaded that her concern for her grandson was only a "political gimmick".

The judge held Mrs Gandhi to be a Hindu. Although married to a parsee, the



Sanjay Gandhi: Dispute over his estate

marriage took place according to Hindu rites.

● In Punjab, the former head priest of the Amritsar golden temple, Pratap Singh, was shot dead at his residence

Russia says it is beating alcoholism

From Alan McGregor, Geneva

The problem of alcoholism among Russians has been stabilized and is starting to show signs of a "certain decrease", according to Mr Sergei Petrovich Bourienkov, the Soviet Health Minister, who is attending the World Health Assembly.

He said the Soviet health authorities were "attentively following" the spread of the disease Aids in Europe, but no cases had yet been reported.

Asked about reports that both Dr Andrei Sakharov, the dissident leader who is confined to the city of Gorky, in poor health and needed proper medical treatment, he said: "Gorky has one of the largest and most modern hospitals in the USSR".

Danes withhold part of missile site costs

From Christopher Follett, Copenhagen

Denmark is to withhold the balance of its agreed contribution to the costs of setting up Pershing and cruise missile sites in fellow Nato states.

Parliament passed by 49 votes to 12 an opposition Social Democrat motion in defiance of the policies of the minority

centre-right Government, which abstained.

Last year Parliament voted, in another move inspired by the left-wing opposition, to freeze Denmark's 75 million kroner (£5.4m) contribution to the costs of the missile deployment.

Australia broadens diplomatic role

From Tony Duboudin, Melbourne

Mr Bill Hayden, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, leaves for an extensive overseas tour today to become the first Australian to visit the Soviet Union in 20 years.

Mr Hayden flies first to London where he is expected to meet Mrs Thatcher before going to Paris to attend the ministerial meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Later, he will have discussions with the Dutch Government in the Hague and will then travel to Moscow for talks with Mr Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister. He will also visit Hungary and Ireland and is expected back in Australia in early June.

Mr Hayden's journey is seen as an attempt by Australia to play a role in reducing international tension by using its

position as a middle-ranking power. He is expected to press the Soviet Union strongly to take a more positive stand on disarmament, and will support recent US proposals for an international convention to ban the use and production of chemical weapons.

Mr Hayden will also try to persuade the Russian leadership to change its mind over its boycott of the Olympics.

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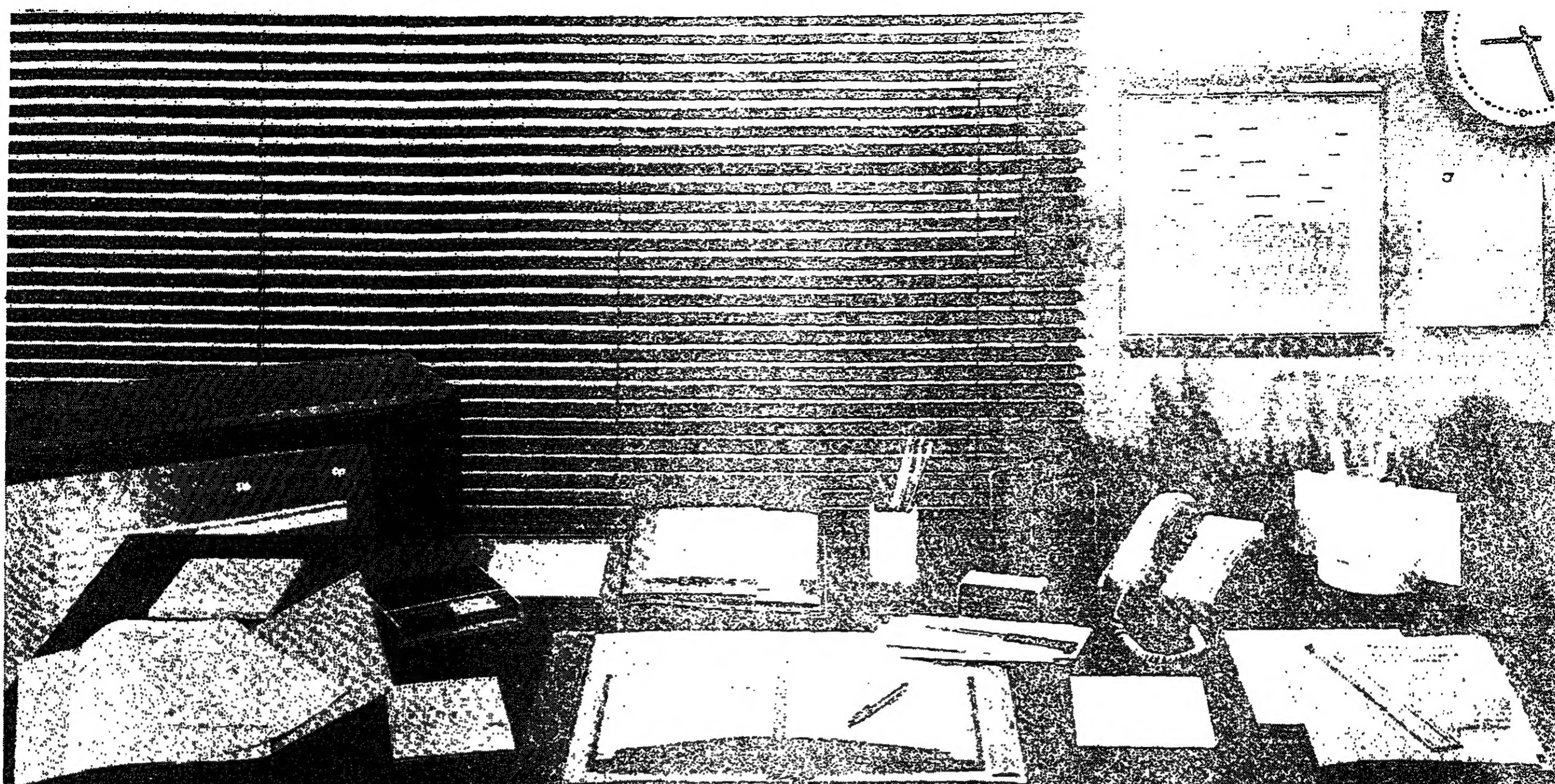
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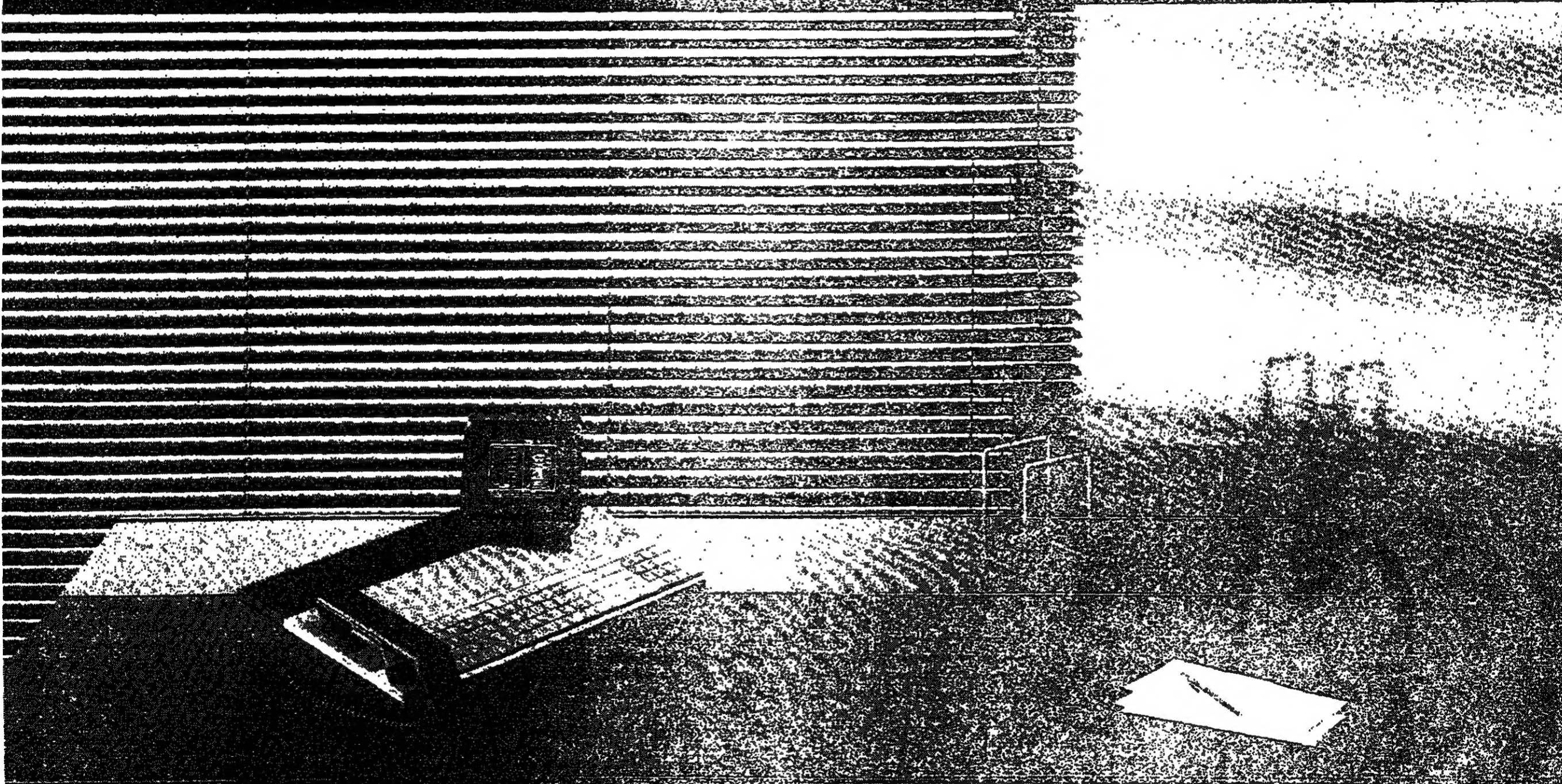
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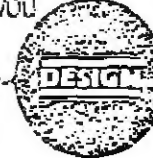
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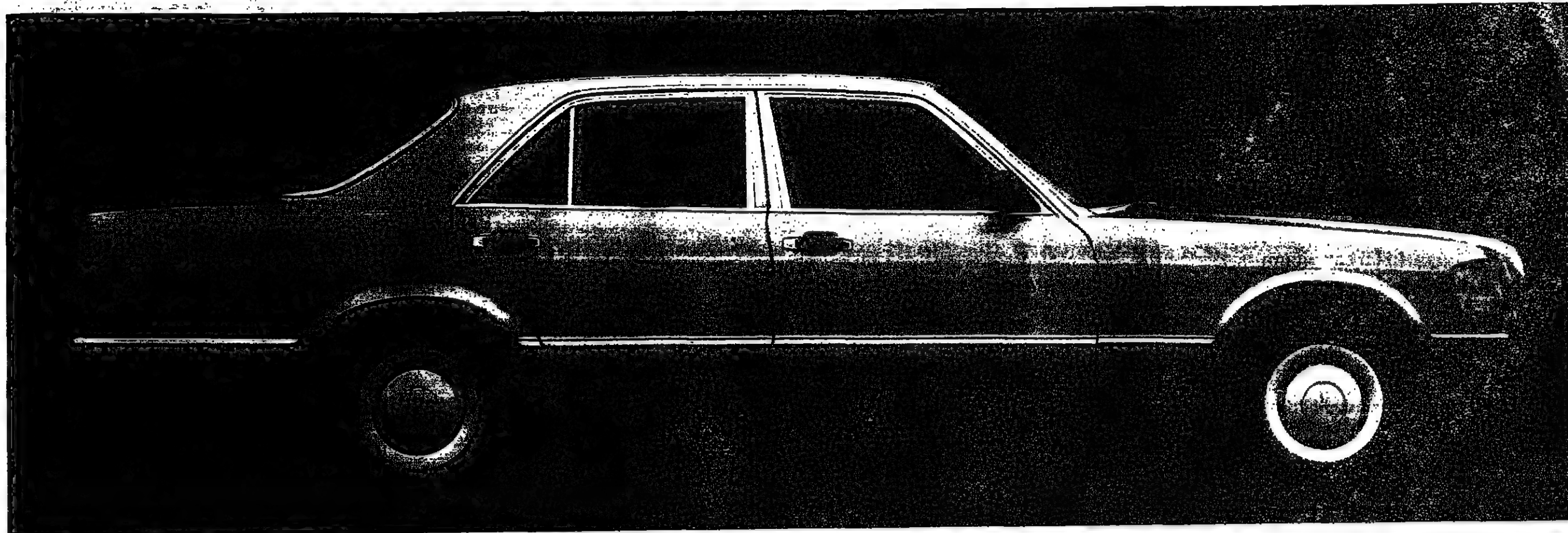
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SPECTRUM

FINDINGS

Seeing the wood for the trees

Bat studies currently under way could improve the design of radar, says Professor David Pye of Queen Mary College. He has been lecturing engineers about bats' abilities to pick out targets in the foliage of trees, despite surrounding clutter which produces multiple echoes, and fly in for the kill at speed.

The particularly sophisticated hunting trick of using two different forms of ultrasonic echolocation systems is shared by our two most common bat species - the pipistrelle and the noctule. They switch from using pitch to measure speed of motion of their target from the frequency of the echo, to using time delay of the echo to measure the distance.

What's particularly exciting to Professor Pye is the complex batroft with a series of flexible attack and defence methods. It has been known for some time that some moths can produce jamming signals by bucking two pulses in their chest to emit loud ultrasonic pulses. Now researchers are discovering several bat features which enable them to counter-attack, stealing up on moths without giving alarm too soon.

The mouse-eared bat is verging on extinction in Britain - only two surviving males are living in the South-east. Now the Nature Conservancy Council is considering importing females from Southern Europe to stop Britain's bat species from dropping from 15 to 14.

Extincting mammals in the bat population has led to concern. A National Bat Group, with a paid coordinator, has been formed this year to link two dozen local interest groups. The first *British Bat* newsletter will be published this summer. Details from the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society, c/o Zoological Society of London, Regents Park, London NW1 4RK (01-586 0872).

Shrinking colonies

A national survey of about 200 bat colonies has found that average populations have dropped from 119 to 178 in 65 last summer. The largest colonies are in Scotland (average 188 bats); the smallest in the Midlands (48). A further count will take place in late June and early July when the mothers forage for food at sunset shortly before their infants take to flight three weeks

A series reporting on research: BATS

after birth. A bat is weaned at five weeks of age.

The maximum bat lifespan is 30 years; the average far less. Some bats don't start breeding until they reach two, and the greater horseshoe bat may be as old as 10 before having young. One offspring is born a year, and not necessarily every year. Nursing mothers share roosts, so a catastrophe in the nursery wipes out a whole colony.

Only six colonies of the greater horseshoe remain, with a total population of 2,200 - a decline of 98 per cent, according to study of piles of guano in caves and other circumstantial evidence collected by Robert Stebbings, adviser to the Nature Conservancy Council, and to the Government on bat legislation.

Lindane-based timber treatments which are deadly to bats are still sold legally, although bats are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, and despite the availability of an alternative chemical. Research by bat experts and the Building Research Establishment has shown that permethrin, a synthetic pyrethroid, kills beetles as required but does not harm bats.

As a result Rentokil have modified their conventional woodworm-killing baits but they only use the new permethrin product if there is evidence of bats, and with a 10-year instead of a 30-year guarantee.

Tests on a house given a lindane treatment 30 years ago has shown that vapours would still be lethal to bats. Conservationists are continuing to test bats' reactions to other chemicals used to combat wood-boring beetles and timber-rotting fungi. The studies are crucial, since half-a-million homes are treated every year.

Well-trod paths

Bats travel. A female Leisler's marked in the Midlands in 1980 has just been found dead in a cellar in Devon, 150 miles away. The longest flight recorded previously was 63 miles by a pipistrelle in East Anglia. Some 20,000 bats have now been marked with tags, improving identification and revealing nightly routes.

The surveys also proved that bats take individual routes in a line from the main colony. Dr Stebbings has recorded regular journeys radiating 40 to 50 miles between summer and winter habitats from the nursery roosts. The repeated patterns indicate that bats are faithful to a particular colony, although members probably live in a couple of hundred roosts according to sex and season.

Details from Dr Stebbings, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon PE17 2LS (Abbots Ripton 04873 381).

About 200 bats from two species, the long-eared and Daubenton's, live within a few feet of each other under a slate and wood roof in a private house in the Scottish Highlands. According to Paul Racey, senior lecturer in zoology at Aberdeen University who studied the roost with Susan Swift, research fellow, the bats are not in competition. They wake at different times and leave through the same small hole without overlapping. The study has detailed how these two colonies have co-existed for many years.

Bats prefer clean and fairly draught-free buildings. Forty-seven per cent of colonies are

found in houses less than 25 years old - "Barrett boxes" has become batman jargon. Contrary to popular belief bats do not harm buildings and droppings dry to a powder with only slight smell - excellent, though uneven, insulation. Since the Wildlife and Countryside Act was passed to protect bats, the Nature Conservancy Council has to be informed on any potential disturbance to roosts.

The council is encouraging the building of bat boxes, made of rough-sawn softwood with a slit in the base. Research has shown that successful use is increased when boxes are on the south sides of trees, high up, in areas rich with insects. Predators include squirrels, woodpeckers and owls - at least one is known to have prized off a bat-box lid.

Blanket coverage

Temperature is important for bat comfort. 20°C is the optimum.

Temperature for greater horseshoes' summertime nursery roosts. An experiment in a roost near Blandford, Dorset, involves four electric blankets (sandwiches of fibreglass in metal mesh), which have been installed in the roof of an eighteenth-century house used by the greater horseshoe colony. The blankets are kept at different temperatures and bat choices are being recorded by infra-red television cameras.

Outside the breeding season, bats choose roosts according to need. Thin ones tend to hang up in low-temperature roosts so that they expend less energy. A bat's flying temperature is 42°C (higher than man's 37°C), but this falls 10 degrees for digestion after landing; then to the surrounding temperature. Research indicates the need for a large number of roosts for a single colony.

Bats' ultrasonic pulses - inaudible to humans - can be heard through bat detectors. A sophisticated second generation, the S200 developed by Queen Mary College, London, reproduces the exact pattern of bat signals.

The detector can give acoustic profiles on the spot, pinpointing bats even in pitch-darkness. For the first time detectors can distinguish the unique differences between each species.

The bats (left) have been persuaded to take part in experiments by being offered a dummy target suspended with a microphone under a balloon, linked to the detector and recorder. This is giving exact measurements of speed (up to 25 miles an hour for these small bats) and precision, down to millimetres at a distance of several metres.

Ann Hills

The Chieftains: when Irish eyes are smiling on the Great Wall of China

The reel thing

Go into a record shop to buy an album by The Chieftains and you might have a hard time finding it. Are they a rock group or classical musicians, or are they Irish folk? Alan Franks listened to their words and music and helps to label them

Last Saturday the Irish music group, The Chieftains played to a packed Festival Hall in London at the start of a four-day British tour to mark their 25th anniversary. During their time together they have probably done more than any other living musicians to raise a largely oppressed body of music from relative obscurity to a community in an international arena. Last year they became the first western group to perform in ensemble with a Chinese folk orchestra, during a trip which is to be the basis of a film documentary. In their own country their records have now sold 250,000 copies, and they once performed to a live audience of 1,350,000 people in Dublin's Phoenix Park, even though, as one of their number admitted: "That was the Pope's day. We were just the opening act."

hran was the kind to be found in the rural "booby bands" of the last century. It was not until nearly 10 years later that the harp was added.

The result is a far cry from the received image of Aran-clad rustics keening out dirges of numbing length. What is being heard this month, in venues as diverse as Exeter Cathedral and a school in Newbury, is music of astonishing rhythmic and melodic complexity in which the eighteenth century Italian mode lives in great harmony with the Gaelic.

The hands fan out to gather the timeless cadences

In England they played the harp for the Sadler's Wells Ballet, *The Rake's Progress*, and this did more than anything else to enhance their standing as artists of classical music.

It was the group's self-education from the outset to restore to a music downgraded in the cities of Ireland, and to do so with only such instruments as would have been available. Their early lineup of two fiddles, harp, whistle, flute and bod-

The really funny thing about their rise to international fame is that, precisely because of the "category problem", they have one foot in the world of rock concerts and film scores and, on all the usual criteria of record and ticket sales, have very nearly superstar status. Funny because of the sheer implausibility of it all: lads - no, grown men from Dublin and Ulster and Roscommon - sharing the bill with the Rolling Stones, or being invited to play at the Capital by Tip O'Neill, or doing a recording with Art Garfunkel.

and all because they learned from their fathers and their grandfathers the old fiddle and airs which poured out of them as naturally as Guinness went back the other way. An Irish joke in which the Irish win.

Yet there are clichés here, about Paddies making good on foreign shores, which have to be avoided. There was a resurgence of traditional music in Ireland back in the early 1950s that reflected a deep concern for the state of "Our Music." It is a matter of delight to Paddy Maloney that whereas there were once only a handful of uilleann pipers coming to the annual conventions for the instrument, there are now several hundred, from all parts of the globe.

These pipes are not to be confused with the older, mouth-blown instrument of war which, with its bone-chilling siren, accompanied the Irish contingent to Crete in 1346. The uilleann form is a mellower but still plaintive affair, with a chanter and drone filled from an elbow bellows. When Maloney, the pivotal member of the band, strikes up, the reel tumbles out above the growl with a sound that could fill a field. As he warms up, first one knee, then the other starts to jig until the contraption seems like some prodigiously musical baby being dandled on his lap.

And that is the most perceptible movement among the six men. In the back row the right fiddle and the bodhran player flicks and jumps in time, the two fiddlers saw away against each other's counter-melodies and the fluter is almost motionless between breaths. Seated at the front next to Maloney is the most unlikely figure of the bunch, the great harpist Derek Bell, the only one in a suit and the only one wearing glasses. The hands fan out across the strings to gather back timeless cadences. Between the bottom bumpings of the bodhran and the tiny tinklings of Bell's top strings, the bowed and the blown instruments are filling the rest of the registers with a swirl and skirl of sound.

Bell and the bodhran player, Kevin Connell represent the poles of the group not only tonally but also in terms of the traditions from which they have all come. Bell studied at the Royal College of Music in Europe and the US with such celebrated teachers as Leon Goossens and Madame Rosina Lhevinne. He has played with the symphony orchestras of London, Pittsburgh, Moscow and Budapest, and more recently performed as a soloist with the Royal Philharmonic in London. Connell meanwhile, is a child of the Fifties and Sixties' international folk music revival, whose first influences were such as the Seegers, Ewan MacColl, and Ian Campbell. "You know, it was out of that movement," he recalls, "that people in Ireland actually became aware of their own traditions."

Matt Molloy, one of the two non-Dubliners in the group, talks of how the traditional music of the country was treated as second class stuff. "Second class to what you ask. I'll tell you: second class to anything else that was going. There was a kind of inferiority complex attached to everything that was your own. It was like, 'down-trodden.' At the formation of the state, the church didn't treat it with much regard."

"No more did the state," says Sean Keane the fiddler. "That's right, Sean, they didn't," says Molloy. "Most of our families, like Paddy's, Sean's and my own, they carried it on in their own small pockets. It was very much alive in Clare, also in Longford, where it was linked with Sligo and Leitrim. As far as the people who played it were concerned, there was no inferiority complex at all, don't get me wrong. It was hard line all the way... when I was a boy, I used to catch it from my

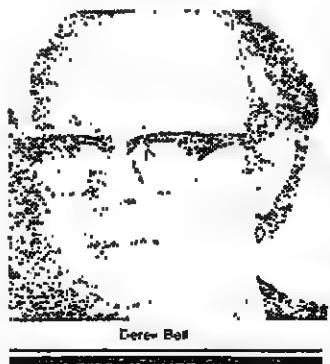
own school-mates. They'd say: 'What d'you want to go playing that kind of stuff for?' and so on."

"I think in the beginning we used to get some of the Americans a bit baffled," says Maloney, "which is perhaps a little surprising when you think that the Irish traditional music was probably much more healthy over there during the Thirties and Forties, being kept alive by the descendants of the famine immigrants. They'd got used to all that commercial stuff like *Does Your Mother Come From Ireland?* which, let's face it, was written by some enterprising Polish expatriate."

Having barred from their line-up all those parvenu instruments like guitars and banjos and, God forbid, synthesizers, the Chieftains would seem to be straightforward custodians of a music too rich to be tampered with. And yet this is not quite the case, as the fiddler Martin Fay points out: "No, hang on a moment, I don't think that we're playing it like it was. In the old days, my guess is that it would have been a bit of a free-for-all, everyone just playing the same thing. They might have improvised, but I doubt if they would have arranged it like we do now."

Fay's contention is that the application of harmony and counterpoint have been mainly responsible for the grafting of a "classical" identity beneath the Chieftains' still-faithful playing of the old melody lines. It is what might be called progressive conservatism. But there is another reason for the classical sound, for when Bell's musical forbear, Carolan, was playing and writing for his harp in the eighteenth century, he was greatly influenced by the early baroque and since he, in turn, was to have such an influence on his compatriots, it is no wonder that the Chieftains' playing so often comes across as a confluence of the Celtic and the courtly.

'The music we play has every classical form'



Derek Bell

As Derek Bell himself explains: "The music we play has every classical form except the sonata. We have fugue imitation dating back to the baroque; even the *Drum's Mairé* tune with which we sometimes open the programme - that's in rondo form."

All this talk and there was plenty more - took place in the unlikely surroundings of a huge new Kensington hotel. It seemed a strange place to harbour such a homely bunch until I was reminded just as Bell and the rest were leaving for the Festival Hall, that it was called the Tara. This, as every Irishman (and no Englishman) knows is the will in County Meath which was the capital of the Fir Bolgs and the Tuatha de Danann. A very distant noise sounded in my head and I scurried to my copy of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*. "The harp that once through Tara's halls/The soul of music shed/Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls/As if that soul were fled."

CORRECTION
The poet Keith Douglas died in Normandy in June 1944, not near El Alamein as stated in Spectrum on the 2nd May.

Auntie and the Young Ones go a'revelling

A new trend is abroad which has not yet been noticed. It's called not-knocking-the-BBC. Yes, the early part of 1984 was deafened by the outcry against the Beeb and because our ears are still ringing with the sound, we haven't noticed that it has stopped. *The Thorn Birds* is forgotten; the ratings battle is not drawing the crowd; it is used to *The Young Ones* can no longer be waved in the BBC's face, and it's months since Max Hastings last lambasted the upper reaches of the Corporation.

Much of what Max said was true, as the middle reaches were quick to agree, but there seemed to be a feeling that once Aubrey Singer had been sacrificed to the gods, things could go quiet again - why, I don't believe I've heard *Sixty Minutes* criticized for more than a week. And as the ratings battle ebbed, the damage on the battleground was much less than supposed.

The BBC may still find it hard to get programmes in the Top Ten, but when you look at most of the ITV programmes that pull in the crowds, you wonder if anyone seriously wants to be in the Top Ten. Furthermore, if a week in which the BBC got 47 per cent of the audience can be described as a very bad week for them, you wonder what they have to do to be called good. If the Tories got 47 per cent in a popularity poll, who would call it bad?

CONCISE CROSSWORD (No 339)

ACROSS
1 Thief (8)
2 Muffy (6)
3 Skilled pilot (3)
4 Pearl string (6)
10 Attraction (5)
11 Last musical part (4)
12 Conference (8)
14 Specialist faculty (6)
17 Lombard's tree (6)
19 Last book leaf (3,3)
22 Dissolute man (4)
24 Spanish currency (6)
25 Young cow (6)
26 Industry body (1,1,1)
28 Attitude (6)
29 Church vaults (6)

DOWN
1 Surpass (5)
2 Swagger (7)
3 Deep change (5)
5 Oyster gem (5)
6 Violoncello (5)
7 Prescription (7)
13 Lavatory (3)
15 Setting (7)
16 Egg cells (5)
17 Greek war dance (7)
18 Treacherous act (7)
20 Song of praise (5)
21 Position (3)
23 Bent knee (5)

SOLUTION TO No 338
ACROSS: 8 Progeniture 9 Nag 10 Retrodden 12 Renew 13 Pitfall 16 Suburbs 19 Audit 22 Whipround 24 Ark 25 Good Samaritan
DOWN: 1 Opener 2 Virgin 3 Sorrower 4 Belt up 5 Kilo 6 Buddha 7 Kennel 12 Emu 14 To and fro 15 Lei 16 Sewage 17 Briton 18 Slummy 20 Death 21 Taking 23 Rush

moreover... Miles Kingston

The fashion for slamming the BBC was in large part just that - a fashion. We love slamming something, but we move from target to target. Channel 4 was getting it in the neck last year and is now agreed to be putting on very good stuff, even if it hasn't got its sums right. Then TV-am fell flat on its face and got the rotten tomatoes, though it seems to be matching the BBC pretty well now. So it was time that the Beeb came in for its fair share of mud-slinging and it has, on the whole, got away quite lightly. You wait and hear the howls of derision that will greet early cable TV. Just you wait and hear.

Meanwhile, the BBC has had the luck to chalk up a few recent successes. David Attenborough's *The Living Planet* was ever so good as *Life on Earth* - and producing a good sequel is the hardest trick of all. (If he wants a title for another series looking at our deteriorating environment, I can offer him something I saw written on a car engine the other day: Negative Earth.) For a fortnight they have given us wall-to-wall snooker, the nearest thing to perfect television ever devised. And now they have started a new series of *The Young Ones*.

Right from the start of the first series I was quite convinced that this is the best, brightest, most inspired TV comedy since Monty Python. Also the funniest. They have latched on to the simple yet hard truth about comedy: that if you have a solid story line and a cast of clearly-drawn characters, you can be as good as you like. *The Young Ones* know that. Not many others do. So, although *The Young Ones* is ostensibly about four ill-matched students in one house, they can without strain introduce a hamster talking broad Scots, the contents of the fridge bursting into song and - a magnificent conceit, this - *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* going mad with boredom and getting nothing from God in answer to their prayers but endless sets of Travel Scrabble. In an effort to emphasize how original the series is and how much better than anything else around, people keep telling us that it is wonderfully anarchic and without precedent. An-

archic is precisely what it isn't: the scripts by Elton, Mayall and Mayer are beautifully controlled and constructed. Without precedent? Nearly, yes, but there is one parallel from nearly 25 years ago which keeps nudging my memory: the radio version of *Hancock's Half Hour*. That programme, like *The Young Ones*, put four or five eccentric monsters in the same house and let them get on with their fantasies, with the latest of excuses for being there. None of the pseudo-sociological background that cripples most sitcom ("John is a single parent with a child who has recently moved in with his divorced father, next door to his mother...") simply a huge delight in making outside egos bump into each other, watching the sparks fly and entering a realm of invention which few comedies even suggest. Twenty-five years hence parents will be saying, "Ah, but you should have seen *The Young Ones*... on the BBC," they might add. So was Hancock, come to think of it.

TSB BANK

Base Rate
With effect from the close of business on 10th May 1984 and until further notice TSB Base Rate will be 9% p.a.

Trustee Savings Banks Central Board, PO Box 33, 3 Copthall Avenue, London EC2P 2AB.

FRIDAY PAGE

MEDICAL BRIEFING

Snuff's the stuff

Can snuff damage your health? For the 250,000 casual and regular nasal takers in this country, who managed to sniff their way through 100,000 kilograms last year, the answer will probably be "no".

Some of the most popular brands are marketed as the tobacco ground with menthol, camphor or eucalyptus - and are claimed to help clear stuffy heads and combat hayfever.

Nicotine from nasal snuff is absorbed into the bloodstream much more quickly than nicotine from chewing gum and similar levels are reached from a pinch of snuff as a drag on a cigarette. And, because the tobacco is not burnt, carcinogenic gases or tar are not produced. So, if snuff is substituted for cigarette smoking, the risks of lung cancer and other diseases will drop.

But, before you reach for the snuff box, remember that every tobacco product carries some health dangers. The whole issue has recently been raised because an American company wants to import a type of "wet" snuff called Skoal Bandits. The snuff is packaged in a tea-bag and eased between the bottom lip and gum. What worries David Simpson, director of the anti-smoking organization Ashi, is that the marketing strategy in America suggests that Skoal Bandits carry few health risks.

Yet a report in America in 1981 suggested that among a group of white women from North Carolina there was a significant increase in mouth and throat cancers which could be directly linked with "snuff-dipping" - the use of these bags. In addition other researchers have linked bad breath, teeth and gum problems and a loss of sense of taste and smell with chronic use of smokeless tobacco.

Mr Simpson has made representations to the Department of Health and the Advertising Standards Authority against the import of Skoal Bandits on the grounds that, health considerations aside, they constitute an additional tobacco product being made available without consultation.

Fit feet

Talk off your shoes and look at your feet. Are your big toes straight or do they veer off, crumpling the other toes? Do you suffer from corns or bunions? If you have any of these problems the chances are they were caused by wearing ill-fitting shoes: if you do nothing now the problem could get worse and cripple you in old age.

Michael Grillage, a Birmingham GP, has recently written a booklet on the importance of foot care, and how it is under-rated.

Too often, Dr Grillage says, shoe shop assistants measure customers' feet while they are sitting down. Feet spread considerably when carrying the full body weight and have to support a considerable force when you are walking or running, so have your feet measured while standing up.

He advises fashion-conscious women not to wear shoes with high heels and narrow toes for more than three or four hours. "Springtime Step" can be obtained from Carnation, Cuxson-Gerrard & Co, Fountain Lane, Oldbury, Warley, West Midlands, B69 3BB. Enclose Sae.

It's a sweat

Excessive perspiration can cause real misery. For most people, hot weather or strenuous exercise are the only occasions when their sweat glands go into overdrive, for others, without any trigger, sweat trickles down to their elbows continuously.

Over-active sweat glands affect the hands, feet and armpits. Sufferers are otherwise completely healthy. According to Dr Andrew Pembroke, consultant dermatologist at King's College Hospital, "It is a genuine problem, quite common, and most unpleasant and embarrassing."

The symptoms start in adolescence, reach a peak in the early to mid-twenties and gradually subside during the thirties. For these people the normal awkwardness of the late teens is compounded by smelly feet, rotting shoes and ruined shirts and dresses.

One of the best treatments, available for only a few years, is a solution of aluminium chloride hexahydrate in alcohol. The solution is applied to the underarms - last thing at night, but it may make the skin sore because it is acidic. People who started the treatment on a nightly basis found that it was so successful they could gradually reduce the frequency to once weekly.

For the hands and feet tablets containing atropine can be quite useful. The drug slows the activity of the glands but, because it involves the whole body, there may be side effects. Stomach upsets, dry throats and mouth and blurred vision are the most common problems.

For intractable problems surgery may be recommended: skin in the armpit containing the largest concentration of sweat glands may be removed or, alternatively, the nerve supply to the armpits may be severed. Dr Pembroke emphasizes that these options are a last resort.

Finally a technique known as iontophoresis may work for sufferers from particularly sweaty hands and feet. A low-level electric current is passed into the skin which, magically, plugs the glands and cuts the sweat production.

Olivia Timbs and Lorraine Fraser

The cruel nightmare of a family kidnapping

Parents snatching

their own children

break no English law.

Frances Gibb looks

at a Bill about to go

before the Lords

that will make this

a criminal offence

Graham was four years old when his father abducted him from his mother. He and his father had been on holiday together. When the two weeks were up, they simply didn't return. His mother Jean Burt, by then divorced and separated from her husband for three years, remembers making routine checks of the hospitals and airlines in case of accident. But she had a nagging suspicion of the truth. "I feared the worst within the first five minutes", she recalls.

It was just over a year before she met her son again, and then in the company of his father and present wife, and 20 months passed before she had him home with her. "The best way to describe the feeling is that it feels as if someone very close to you had died, but worse, because you know that somewhere that child is alive but you don't know what is happening to him."

Her experience of suddenly having her child seized from her care without warning, being faced with tracking down his whereabouts and going through the long, painful and difficult process of securing his return, is more and more common.

Child-stealing - abduction of a child by one parent against the other's will - is on the increase: a tragic spin-off of the climbing divorce rate, one in which the child becomes a pawn in a physical and psychological tug-of-war between divorced or separated spouses and is snatched from the custodial parent, often to be taken abroad, beyond the jurisdiction of this country.

It is a phenomenon that our laws are particularly ill-equipped to deal with. At present, there is no criminal offence of kidnapping one's own child. English law deals with breaches of court custody or wardship care orders as contempt, which carries statutory penalties, including imprisonment, which are rarely enforced. Criminal remedies against parents are not available.

There is a strong tide of opinion in favour of a change in the law, however. This week in the House of Lords, the Crown, in a test action, challenged a recent Court of Appeal ruling confirming that parents could not, in law, kidnap their own children. The Court of Appeal last November quashed convictions for kidnapping and contempt of court in the case of a father, Mr Ian Dailly, who twice snatched his daughter from his former wife and took the child off to New Zealand. It was thought to be the first time in legal history that a father had been convicted of kidnapping his own child.

The judges held there was no such offence as kidnapping a child under 14 by a parent. Setting aside a two-year sentence, they said Parliament had never intended that a mother or father should be prosecuted for child-stealing. The case, they said, was a serious example of a deliberate flouting of a High Court order by a father. But although judges had wide jurisdiction to punish



Wendy Hale

for such action, the father should never have been convicted of kidnapping.

As the law lords consider their judgment, the Government is backing a private member's Bill which has now received its third reading in the Commons. This creates a new offence, carrying up to seven years imprisonment on conviction. A parent, guardian, custodian or father of an illegitimate child who takes or sends that child outside the country without the consent of the other parent or guardian, or of the court which made the custody or care order, will have committed the offence. Parents who snatch children in defiance of a court order and remain in this country will still be dealt with by contempt orders. But the Bill brings parents who abduct abroad, before or after a court custody order, within the criminal law for the first time.

6 Child stealing is a tragic spin-off of the climbing divorce rate, in which the child is a pawn

Both the Lords' decision and the Bill's passage are being closely watched by victims of child-stealing and in particular by those members of Children Abroad, a self-help group that - prompted by her own experience - Jean Burt helped to set up in Keighley, Yorkshire, to advise parents in similar plights.

No official statistics exist, but the group estimates that as many as 100 cases they hear in about a year, there could be as many as 500 throughout the country. In France, they point out, the Ministry of Justice has a record of 1,000 cases a year and that is not thought to be comprehensive.

In America there is a rising incidence of "child snatching". There are now estimated to be up to 100,000 a year usually

perpetrated by fathers who have lost custody of their children. A recent study estimated that seven out of ten children snatched from their homes are never seen again by the parent left behind.

Children Abroad now has nearly 80 members and some 150 cases on their books where parents are still trying to retrieve a child who has been snatched or to prevent a "re-snatch". One mother has faced this three times.

Members - two-thirds mothers, one-third fathers - have varying experiences, but common threads occur. Sheer vindictiveness can be one motive; disputes over access; a thwarted desire for custody; a belief, common among mothers, in the right to care of the child; and blackmail, with a view to stopping divorce proceedings or improving financial settlements. Mark Burt, Mrs Burt's second husband, and a co-founder of the group, says these blackmail cases are among the most distressing, with children forced to write pleading letters and often denied the replies.

Snatching often occurs without warning. When it is the father, the snatch is usually during a period of access. Physical violence is rare unless it is a second or third occasion when the other parent is on guard. When it is the mother, child-stealing often occurs when the husband is at work. One husband returned home to find his child and half the furniture gone, Mr Burt says.

It was the obstacles the Burts faced that made them want to share their experiences. Only through endless questioning of friends, relatives and colleagues, did they finally discover young Graham had been taken to Kuwait. Months of "battering" bureaucracy followed, trying to get the police, Foreign Office and embassy officials to take action. "No one wants to know. They say it is a private dispute", Mr Burt says. An attempt to bring criminal proceedings in the Kuwaiti courts failed because although kidnapping a

child is a criminal act there, the offence originated in England and there needed to be a comparable offence in Kuwaiti jurisdiction for proceedings to succeed. In the end civil proceedings, at a cost of £11,000, secured Graham's return.

They now know how to deal with the system that, for instance, enables a duty judge to be found 24 hours a day to make the child a ward of court, which facilitates Home Office administrative procedures such as passport stops. And consulates now have new guidelines encouraging them to use their powers to help in such cases by, for example, doing welfare reports on the child in their country.

But had the Child Abduction Bill been law, they might have got Graham back in six rather than 20 months. The Bill is set to receive Royal Assent in three months. Mr Timothy Wood, Conservative MP for Stevenage and co-sponsor of the Bill, said: "It will enable parents in a number of circumstances to do something. At present if they are taken abroad, it's often years before they are returned, causing another major disruption for the child and forcing the parent to take expensive civil proceedings."

When a criminal offence has been committed, parents will be able to pursue the child through extradition treaties, where they exist; and where they do not, countries such as Kuwait, where there is a similar criminal offence, may be more sympathetic, he said.

Another advantage is that the police will be more willing to take action; and the cost of the prosecution in time and money will fall to them, Mr Burt says. Relatives too may be less willing to help the "snatcher" with a criminal offence hanging over their heads. "But we chiefly hope it will be a deterrent. Of course it will help us get the children back more quickly, but we'd rather they were never taken in the first place."

Surrogate sanctions

From Dr James Appleby, Kent and Canterbury Hospitals

Your article (Wednesday Page April 25) featuring a beautiful surrogate baby made compelling reading. It highlighted the immense gratification that baby Amanda gave to her "adoptive" parents' desire to have a child of their own. However your correspondent glossed over the more complex ethical, social and legal issues raised.

Fundamentally such "triangular" arrangements involve a change in the motive for creating children from a desire to have them for their own sake to a desire on the surrogate mother's part to have them because they can provide some other benefit. Even though it may be said to be an altruistic attempt to bring happiness to an infertile couple, the child is still being "used" by the surrogate. To sanction the use and treatment of human beings as a means of achieving other ends instead of as ends in themselves, is to accept an ethic with a tragic past and establish a precedent in this country with a dangerous future. In the United States it has been found that few surrogates will volunteer their services for altruistic reasons alone and the ban on the payment of fees beyond medical expenses has in effect stopped the practice in some states.

Surrogate arrangements exert pressures upon the normal family structure and society as there is an intrusion by the third adult into the marital community. The adverse long term psychological and social effects on the child are predictable. In all, from the asymmetry of the relationship the adopting parents have towards the child. As evidence of this accumulation, it would seem that securing the welfare of children (and thus our future generations) should take precedence over sanctioning arrangements which may satisfy the desires of individuals or pairs of adults who are able to afford to buy a child for themselves.

Plotted history

From Ann Pilling, 57 St John Street, Oxford

It is a pity that the time warp (a device beloved by writers of fantasy, and no doubt by those of the new "interactive fiction") does not go into reverse, and catapult some great writers of the past into the present, for the new possibilities for their books are clearly endless (Monday Page April 30).

But had the Child Abduction Bill been law, they might have got Graham back in six rather than 20 months. The Bill is set to receive Royal Assent in three months. Mr Timothy Wood, Conservative MP for Stevenage and co-sponsor of the Bill, said: "It will enable parents in a number of circumstances to do something. At present if they are taken abroad, it's often years before they are returned, causing another major disruption for the child and forcing the parent to take expensive civil proceedings."

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TALKBACK

Take Jane Austen's silly little plots. Emma no longer has to marry that prig, Mr Knightley, for if she does "the adventure ends here". Now she can go back to 33, and reconsider Mr Elton, or skip ahead to 69, order a carriage and pair, and go up to Town, for the season.

Then there is *Hamlet* ("How now! a rat?"). If he doesn't fancy making a stab at Polonius through the arras he can always go to 37, and have a quick word with Ophelia.

"I accept," writes Colin Kapp, "that the spoken word and printed page have served story tellers well, but I get the feeling that computers will serve them even better." A little further on, Richard Gollner, who'd "love to be Alice", talks nostalgically about that "old technology, the book". This is fascinating, but also slightly alarming to those engaged in trying to get the young to read. "There is hardly a major publishing house which is not exploring the potential of the field", Alan Franks informs us. But have they considered any implications beyond the commercial ones?

I am glad to have read *The Hobbit* (100,000 computerized copies sold) in its boring old original form, glad, also, to have read C. S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, for these too, we are told, are now being sized up for their computer potential. One wonders what computerized classics will do to the reading habit? Increase the sales of the original? Or are straight books a thing of the past?

Teacher's defence

From G. C. Pinner, The Wilderness School, Seal Hill Road, Swindon

As a headmaster of 22 years' experience, I cannot allow Mr John Pearman's attack on teachers (Monday Page, May 7) to pass unchallenged. Teachers are poorly paid compared with their university colleagues, who have entered other professions, and it is essential that high quality staff are recruited. Why should teachers' families and dependents be made to suffer?

It has been my experience that the majority of teachers give devotedly of their time and energy to enable their pupils to have the best possible educational experience and make considerable financial sacrifices to travel to Saturday fixtures, evening parents' meetings and so on.

Teachers are not lightly stirred into action but on this occasion they have been too aggressively provoked by the minister.

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Libraries lose a friend

COMMENT

I had always innocently considered libraries my friends. I disapproved of fellow writers who, during the campaign for Public Lending Right, accused the public library system of "stealing" their books and lending them free. But I felt there to be a sort of unwritten contract between librarians and me. I would provide high class fiction and non-fiction for them to lend in the quietest British way to (in my case) some 80,000 readers a year, on the understanding that they would buy sufficient copies of my work to perform this extraordinary service efficiently. We needed each other, I thought.

But now I am not so sure. In the last 15 years, words that I had taken for granted were part of the vocabulary of any responsible librarian, words like "quality" and "balanced intake" and "education", have become regarded as the language of elitist reaction. Instead, the fashionable vocabulary is "service to community", "user-friendly" and - more sinister in its muddled-headed sub-Marxism - "free access to the sources of information".

Let me analyze this last phrase, much bandied about at a librarians' conference at which I was recently an uneasy and increasingly mutinous listener. What it ought to mean - what it

genuinely does mean to some librarians - is that the libraries are now providing useful pamphlets on the Rent Act and the like. So far, so good: it is surely right that people should know they can drop into their library for this purpose. But the phrase, and the principle, are not infinitely extensible. And when I hear books - novels, biographies, history, philosophy, poetry - all lumped together under the heading "sources of information", and when I hear the good old concept of free access perverted to mean that no one should pay for anything in any form (except the poor writer, who pays with his time, energy and life) then I know that I am in the presence not just of people who are no friends of mine but, what is far worse, people who have no coherent view of their function.

Arguably it is a Good Thing for libraries to lend copies of hardback, specialist books which most library users could genuinely not afford. By the same token, it would seem to follow that it is not the libraries' function to provide lavish supplies of mass circulation paperback that are freely available down the road for the price of six cups of coffee, two-

and-a-half Tube fares to Brent Cross or one eighteenth of a modest meal out for two. Of course libraries have a duty to pay some attention to the mass taste of ratepayers (code for the provision of light romances to old age pensioners). But this must not mean cutting back on less popular works of some literary distinction - the basis of the whole grand edifice of the free library system.

It is extremely unfortunate that reduction in library budgets in the last few years has coincided with a time when concepts of what a library might be for local inhabitants have become increasingly visionary. Inspired by computer technology and by a heady idea of the library as a power for good among hitherto unimpressed levels of the population ("Give me your poor, your huddled masses... and let us ban Enid Blyton and Little Black Sambo") all too many librarians do not seem to have stopped to reflect that resources are finite, that they cannot do everything and must therefore, (a) make choices and (b) not lose sight of older values while pursuing new ones.

Meanwhile, some talk with messianic energy about the need to "get people who don't want to read into the libraries". To this end, all sorts of fund-con-

suming plays have been dreamed up - pop records, software, soft toys among the (vetted, guaranteed non-racist, non-sexist) children's literature. Herbert Spencer, the nineteenth century political philosopher, predicted that one of the many undesirable results of state intervention in life would be free dissemination of pulp literature. Even that far-sighted cynic did not foresee that the pulp on offer might not be literature of any description.

Gillian Tindall

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THE TIMES DIARY

And another union rift

The Oxford Union is involved in an acrimonious debate over the disclosure that Walter Perry, steward of the union's social facilities, has been given early retirement with a reported £90,000 pay-off. The figure, leaked to the student newspaper *Friday*, caused much dispute, and was settled only after the Union crafted in baronet don Harvey McGregor of New College. Perry's departure follows disagreements over management and the hiring of staff, and leaves the Union's already shaky finances even more enfeebled. I am told the Union now hopes to raise £200,000 by auctioning some of its most valuable antiquarian books, part of the charitable trust set up to preserve the debating and library functions. No doubt a few well-placed words will be said about that as well.

Choose-a-muse

The literary progress of James Fenton and Peter Levi towards the winning post of the Oxford poetry professorship - "No, no, after you, old chap" - may yet be halted, hobnobbing poet and cleric addit. Clavin Ewart has entered the race. He is being nominated by author Tim Winton, doubtless smelling in the Fenton-Levi carve-up the sort of very consensual success in his *Nemesis* book on old boy connections. Ewart launches his campaign here with two new clerichisms which I commissioned yesterday:

I do believe I would be as good as Peter Levi and I'm certainly better out Fentoning James Fenton and the rider.

(If the Muse would choose (from the greater and the lesser) would she actually want a poetry professor?

Pili poppet

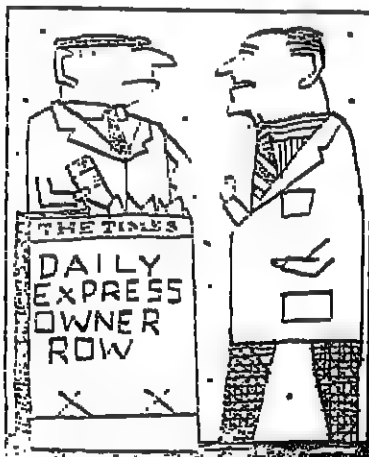
PSC *Breakfast Time* viewers were shocked yesterday by unlined Selina Scott's confession that she was taking pills "to slow down the aging process." Where on earth had she got such an idea? They might have guessed: Barbara Cartland filled her head with SOD (Super Oxide Disintegrator) during an interview at her Hatfield mansion, mercifully never shown.

Q The GLC, patron of the minority, ethnic, proletarian arts, has finally succumbed. It has commissioned a work for its open-air concert at the Crystal Palace Bowl on July 29 by composer Derek Bourgeois.

Troops in

An unlikely tale comes from Belfast where I hear that a Sinn Féin councillor, Alex Maskey, has complained about the absence of British Army vehicles in Catholic West Belfast. This seeming about-face from a supporter of "Troops Out" is explained by the fact that because the army does not escort Post Office vans into the area, three offices have closed through lack of funds.

BARRY FANTONI



'It must be serious. There's no bid yet from Maxwell'

Coles to Jordan

My Whitehall mole tells me that John Coles, Mrs Thatcher's Foreign Office private secretary to Number Ten, is about to be named successor to Sir Alan Urwick, Britain's high-flitting ambassador in Jordan. I understand that Sir Alan - who was recently knighted during the Queen's most dangerous royal tour there - has sought the Jordanian government's agreement to the move. There is unlikely to be any difficulty: King Hussein is a known admirer of Mrs Thatcher, and will probably be delighted to have her protégé in Amman. Sir Alan, I suspect, will be stalling the handover. He is tipped to move on to Cairo where I am told the incumbent ambassador, Sir Michael Weir, is refusing to budge until he retires next February. Also about to retire is our man in Baghdad, John Moberley, who seems destined to spend his years with Palestinian refugees. I am told the Government is lobbying to get him the job as Secretary-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency.

In common

Ken Livingstone, flush with the success of the Thames barrier's queenly inauguration, has admitted a change of heart about the Royal Family. When reminded by biographer John Carvel at the ICA discussion yesterday about his earlier anti-royalist stand - including the comment that he couldn't see "what the public gets from Princess Anne" - Ken said he had made a crucial mistake: "I based my opinion of her on what I heard from the media."

PHS

Death with dignity for the GLC

After sailing through its committee stage in the Commons this week (despite the Heath-Gilmour ripple effect) the bill to cancel the 1983 Greater London Council elections looks unstoppable. The growing certainty of demise will not, however, stop the County Hall jobs boom. During April the GLC placed advertisements for at least a score of well-paid jobs that can scarcely last longer than the next 12 months, and the recruitment goes on.

It has sought to recruit special policy advisers (nuclear and special policy researchers (arts and recreation), a research assistant for employment and welfare, a clerk to the women's committee, a "senior policy implementation officer", a head of road safety, transport planners and, fittingly, a senior recruitment officer (£12,444 - £14,076).

There is a budget provision for some 1,500 extra staff to be taken on this year, plus staff for the Greater London Enterprise Board and for the multitude of voluntary organizations supported by County Hall. And there is room for more. Under-spending was one of the Labour administration's problems last year; this year there will again be difficulties in exhausting the huge budget provided by London's ratepayers.

Is it a scandal? It certainly seems that way to the Tory borough leaders who are relishing less and less sorting out the mess of London

government. To them here is evidence of Labour's wish to pull down the pillars of County Hall as they leave behind a trail of expensive commitments, contracts to be paid off and an army of permanent staff entitled to redundancy terms.

Yet expensive though these new jobs are and will be, they were clearly promised by Labour's 1984-85 budget. Indeed, what is surprising is just how little disruption and terminal extravagance there is in the GLC, despite its impending demise.

Those new jobs, say Labour councillors, are needed because the GLC show is still on the road: there is a rosy belief that the Lords could still delay abolition. Illyd Harrington, deputy leader of the council, says the abolition battle has given the GLC such "credibility" that nothing must be allowed to mar its role of a democratic authority responsibly administering transport and the other services.

Peter Seers, of the 17,000-strong GLC Staff Association, says colleagues may be scanning other councils' vacancy lists, but there is no despair, even in such areas as architecture or planning.

Labour's official line is that its propaganda may work; only the passage into law of the so-called Paving Bill cancelling next year's GLC election will convince them there are only months to go. Even then "responsibility" will rule until the signing and sealing of the

abolition statute itself - sometime next spring on current timetables.

Meanwhile there is not much evidence of financial jigger-pokery. The controversial Greater London Enterprise Board has been well funded for 1984-85: it has enough money to make a series of land and property purchases, because of its particular legal status (a company wholly owned by GLC councillors), unravelling it would be difficult.

There are suggestions that grants to voluntary organizations should be bumped up to provide financial security for several years. In other words the lesbians and ethnic and community arts bodies might be given money to buy property or in other ways to salt money away for use in that bleak post-GLC future.

Labour's frontbench councillors, the committee chairmen especially, are well aware that they face a dilemma. Do they organize their administration over the next few months that it is simple to continue once the GLC goes (and so benefit the service consumers), or do they try to make the lines of management impossible to unravel? The South Bank arts complex could be prepared for hiving off as a unit under its director, Lord Birkett; the GLC's historic buildings administration is already prepared for its quagmire future as an independent entity; do they allow officers to proceed along these lines elsewhere?

Labour's sense of responsibility has limits. Within months the GLC will begin putting together a budget for 1985-86 to be used by the group of borough councillors who will take over in 1985. That budget will be "rate-capped". The finance chairman, John McDonnell, could play an infinite variety of games with the figures, each of which could make life very tricky indeed for Westminster's Lady Porter, Peter Bowness of Croydon, or the other Tory leaders. They will be caught between government ministers and ratepayers expecting rate reductions, and Londoners demanding unchanged fire cover, blue plaques, meadow potholes and functioning traffic lights.

Alan Greengross, leader of the Tory group at the GLC, sees the months from February to May next year as the most difficult. By February the Government should have pushed the abolition bill through. What then would Labour have to lose?

The answer is that a few extreme-left Labour councillors might want disruption and administrative mayhem. But they do not include Ken Livingstone. Whatever else the Labour leader is (a new biography gives him the visage of a saint) he is an ambitious politician who has always had an eye on the next rung. His future lies in national politics. He is unlikely to wish to see Labour adopt a nihilist line. Next spring there will be pyrotechnics at County Hall, but no arson.

David Walker

Edward Mortimer urges a more realistic approach to the Saddam regime



Why Moscow must be denied an open door to Iraq

The Russians are back in favour in Baghdad. Iraq's pro-Soviet tilt has become clearly visible to diplomats there only in the last two or three months, but it is the predictable response to a pro-Iraqi tilt in Soviet policy that was already clear last summer and probably goes back to the Iraqi defeat at Khormanshahr in May 1982, which led to Iraq's retreat from Iranian territory. It is said the Russians sought to dissuade Iran from carrying the war across the frontier. Rebuffed by the ayatollahs, they then made up their minds to avert an Iraqi collapse. That summer a Soviet military mission, led by a major-general, visited Iraq. The flow of Soviet weapons, already resumed on a small scale in May 1983, began in earnest in January 1983.

At that point Moscow may still have hoped to keep in with both sides. But by summer 1983, after the destruction of the communist Tudeh party in Iran, it must have been clear that Iraq offered better opportunities. Last August two Iraqi-Soviet oil agreements, of unspecified content, were signed in Moscow, and in October Iraq received a visit from Yakov Ryabov, chairman of the Soviet State Committee on External Economic Relations. This 55-year-old senior official replaced an elderly nonentity as Soviet co-chairman of the Soviet-Iraqi joint economic commission. That body met in Baghdad in March and prepared several major economic projects which were finalized during the visit to Moscow last month of Iraq's deputy prime minister and economic overlord, Taha Yasin Ramadan.

Tariq Aziz, the foreign minister and one of President Saddam Hussein's closest advisers, confirmed to me last week that these projects include the development of the oil fields in the south (where Iraq's main untapped reserves are located), the construction of a "huge electrical complex", and a nuclear hydraulic plant in the north. Together, he said, they were worth a billion dollars, and they were to be financed by "very easy loans" on which Iraq would have to start payments only after the projects were completed, and for the first three or four years the interest payable would be

cut by half. The arms purchases, too, involved "easy and satisfactory" credit arrangements though they were not, he emphasized, outright grants.

Moscow is thus making a sizable investment in the future of Iraq's Baathist regime, and thereby is acquiring a major role in several key sectors of Iraq's economy. The political corollary is that relations are back on the cordial basis which characterized them before 1974.

What does all this mean for the West? Not, or not yet, that Iraq is turning its back on us. France, of course, remains a trusted and valued supporter. More generally, western firms are seen as best able to supply many of Iraq's needs, on strictly commercial terms. But Iraq does tend to see western countries other than France as hostile, because Iraq is fighting with weapons mainly of western origin, and because its war effort is financed mainly by oil sales to the West, with Japan the worst culprit. And even if the West were genuinely neutral, its performance would still compare unfavourably with Moscow's from the Iraqi point of view.

Does it matter? Not, perhaps, if you think Iraq is going to lose the war anyway. But that looks rather less plausible than it did a year ago. Since then, it is true, Iran has been able to occupy small pockets of Iraqi territory, the most significant being the Majnoon islands in the marshes north-east of Basra, captured in a surprise attack in February. Iraq's use of chemical weapons in this battle - still stoutly denied by Mr Aziz for the record, but conceded by other officials in private - was widely interpreted as a sign of desperation. But it seems to have been done on a small scale, and confined to the marsh area where

Iraq could not deploy tanks. It may have been undertaken as an experiment, and to prove Iraq's determination to resist the Iranian "human waves" by whatever methods necessary, however distasteful.

But the front as a whole has held steady now for nearly two years. Iraq's superiority in equipment is clearer than ever, and Soviet support effectively guarantees that it will continue. Iraqi soldiers have proved they are willing to fight and die in defence of Iraqi soil. The Shia revolt on which Khomeini once counted has not occurred. The Baath regime has given proof not only of its ruthlessness (if that were ever in doubt) but also of its non-sectarian character and - by Middle Eastern standards anyway - of its incorruptibility. There are no stories of Baath leaders having Swiss bank accounts or luxury villas abroad. Some officials caught taking bribes have been executed.

There is no question, Mr Aziz assured me, of the rapprochement with Moscow leading to a reconciliation with the Iraqi communists, who "bear the responsibility of their short-sightedness and their negative attitude towards the revolution and the leadership". Only among the Kurds of the north does the regime feel the need to extend its popular base, and it has high hopes of doing so through an agreement with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, led by Jalal Talabani.

The end of the war with Iran is not in sight, but the assumption that Iraq must crack sooner or later is not self-evident. Austerity has replaced ostentatious public works. Arab neighbours give financial help with growing impatience, but have little choice other than to continue. But Iraq's own oil exports should begin to pick up this summer with an

increase in the capacity of the Turkish pipeline from 850,000 to 980,000 barrels a day. Even more important is the planned link to the pipeline which crosses Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea. This should enable Iraq to start exporting another 1,500,000 barrels a day some time next year, or at the latest in 1986. Another million barrels a day could flow through the proposed new pipeline to Aqaba in Jordan, if the Americans agree to finance it.

If Iraq does survive the war it will emerge transformed: leaner, tougher, the only Arab nation to have held its own in battle for longer than five weeks. It will not be quite as nasty as Khomeini's Iran, but it will be hardly less formidable, and it is likely to feel it owes nothing to the West.

Yet there are people in Iraq who hope that the regime will then feel confident enough to allow a greater degree of internal freedom. Last week's symposium in the Gulf (organized jointly by the University of Basra and London's Arab Research Centre), at which Iraqi academics were encouraged to debate publicly with prominent Nasserist intellectuals from Egypt and with recently retired senior officials of the US State Department, even answering back to Mr Aziz himself who spoke at four of the sessions, was regarded by many as an unprecedented and potentially promising event - as was the friendly treatment given to Dr Hana Batatu, a Palestinian expert on Iraqi politics now working in the US and hitherto regarded by the regime as a public enemy.

It is hard to see Iraq ever becoming a liberal democracy, but one can perhaps imagine it evolving into a more enlightened despotism, especially if the West gives it slightly less grudging support now as it struggles to hold back the tide of fanaticism. Iraq may have been the aggressor in 1980 - the point is arguable, the provocation was extreme - but unquestionably it is now only Iran that wants to continue the war. Iraq may be a very imperfect representative of modern civilization, but what is at issue now between it and Iran is whether modern civilization is something to which one should even aspire.

Hongkong: a democratic challenge to Peking

The House of Commons will finally debate the future of Hongkong next week. Seven residents of the colony are now in London to persuade it that the liberties of 5.3 million people must be protected after China resumes sovereignty in 1997.

The bedrock issue for the people of Hongkong is how to ensure that their free-wheeling way of life remains intact. China, for its part, must avoid a panic in a region that will soon be its most prosperous, especially because such a panic would further alarm Taiwan, which is next on Peking's list for reunification.

What worries the seven-man delegation of Hongkong notables now visiting Britain is that MPs, if not Foreign Office diplomats, are taking China's promises at their face value. The problem is that few in Hongkong believe the Chinese will fulfil their guarantees.

The delegates are concentrating on the final London-Peking settlement which may be drafted late this month and must be signed, to a Chinese-imposed deadline, in September. This settlement, the delegation insists, must be so tightly woven that China cannot renege. Only explicit provisions for post-1997 education, press freedom,

public security and the like will begin to restore confidence in the future of the territory.

One of the delegates represents Meeting Point, an action group composed of young businessmen and professionals. Its chairman, Lao Nikeung, told me last week in Hongkong, "If I were in China, they would have crushed me already. But with things as they are - our prosperity, their need not to frighten Taiwan - we have a chance to get real guarantees and form a government so that we can stand up to them."

Most of Hongkong's inhabitants are refugees, or the children of refugees, from 30 years of Maoist deprivation of human and civil rights. Nothing unsettles such men more than article 35 of the new Chinese constitution which stipulates freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and demonstration. None of these freedoms exists, except when it suits the Party.

It is not merely the educated classes who worry about 1997 and after. Eighty per cent of those who responded to a poll in Shamshuipo (West), the district represented by urban councillor Li Chikyeung, one of the London delegates, fear that

despite its promises, Peking will intervene in Hongkong's affairs after the British depart.

At the official *Ta Kung Pao*, the communist newspaper which transmits Peking's voice to the colony, one of its editors, Lee Tsungye, admitted to me that "a question of confidence exists. But we have completely reversed 32 years of lies (Dengist code for Maoism). We know that what has happened in China makes communism look bad."

Down the road is Xinhua, the Chinese news agency, and Peking's unofficial embassy, the only Hongkong building over which the Red Flag invariably flies. Its vice-director, Li Chuenen, was equally conciliatory. "We are trying to create a China conducive to confidence in Hongkong. You must look at the big picture. Never mind the ripples." The "ripples" I had just asked him about were the recent campaign to combat "spiritual pollution" among intellectuals and the wave of executions which since late August has cost more than 6,000 lives.

Perhaps the most impressive of new guarantees recently given by the

Chinese, particularly because its reliability can be checked soon, was made to urban councillor Li Chikyeung two weeks ago in Peking. He was assured that when the National People's Congress drafts China's new Fundamental Law or mini-constitution within three years, Hongkong residents, perhaps from the Legislative or Executive Councils, and even expert expatriates, will participate.

But guarantees, no matter how watertight, are not enough for the seven Hongkong delegates, or for the millions whose hopes and demands they represent. What they want is an elected representative government, already in place at some local levels.

If it comes to pass - and China claims that it wants it to - Peking will be in a dilemma. It has already stated that whoever is elected as mayor or governor must secure China's approval, even though he will be a resident of Hongkong. But if Peking turns down a duly elected candidate it will be a fatal first move. On the other hand, can a regime which warns Tibetan yak-herders not to read Sartre possibly keep its hands off 5.3m volatile entrepreneurial ex-colonials?

Jonathan Mirsky

David Watt

Can Prior finesse the Forum?

There are two ways of looking at the New Ireland Forum's report. If you read it like an Ulsterman you see all the old "green" codology tumbling from the page. The nationalist arrogance, the awful sanctimoniousness, the historical fantasizing are all there, as usual, and in good measure. Moreover it is ultimately a thoroughly self-serving document, whose recommendations are intended to promote the unification of the Irish island under conditions which, in the long run and in spite of all the proposed safeguards, would place the predominant influence where Republicans believe it rightly belongs - namely with the majority of the whole.

If you read the report as a citizen of the Irish Republic, you see it in a very different light. You compare it with past declarations on this subject from the political parties of the republic and marvel at how far they have agreed (pace Mr Charles Haughey) to modify the old shibboleths. The public admission that unification can come about only by negotiated consent and that Irish nationalism has in the past "underestimated the full dimension of the Unionist identity and ethos" is a giant step forward.

The promise that a new Ireland would need a new constitution based on religious and cultural diversity implies, although it does not explicitly state, that the specifically "Catholic" clauses of the present constitution of the republic, including the recently approved anti-abortion amendment, would be thrown out (presumably over the furious opposition of the church hierarchy).

Both these readings are legitimate and true in their way. Unionists are entitled to be sceptical about the report because, when all the wrapping is taken off, it still enshrines an aspiration that most of them instinctively reject.

But the fact remains that it also contains sentiments and proposals that even five years ago would not have had the faintest chance of securing official consensus in Dublin. The question for the government in Westminster is whether this second (Republican) truth really changes anything, given that the first (Unionist) truth remains immutable.

The starting point of the calculation, naturally, is to decide if Northern Protestant opposition to unification really is adamant under any terms the Republic might offer now, and in the foreseeable future. My own impression is that it is. Of course the Protestant population is not monolithic - the countryside being less anti-Catholic than the towns, for instance, and the middle classes less so than the working class. But one generalization is true: When the Forum admits that the South has underestimated the toughness and cultural obduracy of the Unionist mind it does not go nearly far enough. Even English public opinion has no real conception of what it means.

Protestant Ulster, collectively speaking, has had a siege mentality for more than 300 years, and everything that has happened in the last 15 years has simply hardened it still further. Like the Quebecois, the Basques or the Afrikaners, the Northern Protestants define themselves by their separateness. Such people are bound to be deeply suspicious of newly-minted Republicans who promise to respect their way of life. They are not about to risk the slightest sacrifice of their own cultural integrity in order to restore the "historic integrity" (again, the Forum phrase) of Ireland. Indeed, they will violently resist any steps which look like a serious threat to it.

This completely rules out, from their point of view, at least two of

the Forum's options - the unitary state and the joint authority. The first sweeps away the border which they regard as the only real defence against eventual assimilation; the second, by putting them partly under Republican authority, is (if it is more than purely cosmetic) a thick end of an even thicker wedge. The third (confederal) idea looks far the most promising as a long-term bet for it would allow the Protestants to devolve upwards to a joint Belfast-Dublin authority only so much of their sovereignty (say, in foreign relations) as they are ready to give up at any given time. The snag here is that it presupposes an independent Ulster capable of taking such decisions - and an independent Ulster (while by no means unacceptable to Mr Ian Paisley) is unacceptable both to the official Unionists and the Catholic minority.

If I am right that these are the basic views of the majority of the Protestants, then the shift in Republican views which the Forum has signalled does not actually help much. In fact it makes matters more difficult by putting Mrs Thatcher and her colleagues in the dangerous position of either trying to coerce the Protestants or of appearing more unreasonably oppressive than ever to the Catholic minority. Of course it is a crucial part of the Forum's case that this is not a Hobson's choice. Britain, they believe, can and must resort to coercion.

The "can" part - now elaborated by the Irish Prime Minister - depends on a distinction between handing over any sovereignty to Dublin (which would transgress the "consent" clause of the 1973 Northern Ireland Constitution Act) and an arbitrary but, in Dr Fitzgerald's view, entirely legal decision of the British government that Dublin should have a "say" in running the province.

The "must" element is, in effect, a claim that unaltered direct rule from Westminster is now more dangerous than the alternatives. The gains of Sinn Féin in the North and the decline of the moderate Republican SDLP depend, it is said, on a complete breakdown of Catholic consent unless something is done to give the Catholic minority an outlet for their aspirations.

The signs are that Mr Prior, the Northern Ireland Secretary, and even the Prime Minister accept at least a major part of the "must" case, especially now that the Forum report has heightened Catholic expectations. Some gesture has to be made. The coercion of the Protestants is quite another matter. Even leaving aside Conservative Party calculations and the blandishments of Mr Enoch Powell (whose recent discovery and proclamation of Mrs Thatcher's unexplained wisdom and even genius is, no doubt, significant), the notion that the British government could risk the serious alienation of the Protestant majority, with all that might entail in terms of increased tension and violence, is simply not possible.

In these circumstances the only conceivable finesse open to the Cabinet is some variant of the FitzGerald formula - that is, a limited strengthening of London-Dublin cooperation on Ulster (perhaps with some new parliamentary dimension), which can just about be sold in the Falls Road as a bit of "joint authority" but which can be presented in East Belfast as leaving the realities pretty much as they are. It is a pretty paltry option but it is about as much as responsible politicians looking for lesser evils in the real world of Ulster can get out of the Forum report, and perhaps, with luck, that may be better than nothing.

Philip Howard

Cathedrals with aspirations

I am worried about Gloucester Cathedral. No doubt the old heap can stand it, having stood up to heavier burdens for nine centuries. The worry is whether it should be included in the premier division of the top 10 British cathedrals.

Grading cathedrals is more fun than *Desert Island Discs*. For one thing, the music is better. For another thing, you do not have to put up with Roy Plomley asking fulsome questions in that plummy voice.

Of course this High Victorian passion for making lists is subjective and silly. Such aesthetic judgments depend on a great many variables: from the weather and the company in which you visit the cathedral, to whether they are singing a Matthew Passion or performing an Alternative Service, with your next-door neighbour grabbing you and giving you a greeting of peace. (As it happens, they were both doing both when I last visited Gloucester.) Cathedral-collecting is not objective, but it is fun.

For the purpose of the game, I think we have to ignore the obvious temptation not to, for the relief of being able to leave out Westminster. But not ruined abbey: for if you include them, a sense sublime of Tintern is a strong contender for the first division; and Fountains and St Andrews are dark and ruinous horses.

One man's misericord is another man's postern. But I take it that there can be no argument about the first nine of the top 10. Lincoln and Durham, of course; York and Canterbury; Exeter and Salisbury; St Paul's - even though the great bubble dome is fenced in by modern matchboxes; it is still the pride and joy of London; and I do not see how you can exclude Westminster Abbey, dammit.

That makes eight. Common sense and logic insist that Ely takes ninth place; that octagon lantern, rising over the fens like the crow's nest of a stately sailing ship, gives Ely one of the top three distant cathedral prospects in Britain; the other two being, naturally, Lincoln and Durham.

Sorry, Norwich. The heart bleeds for the misericords of Beverley and the leaves of Southwell. Tough, Winchester and Wells. It is too long since I visited Lichfield, but I remember that tower and spire as an astonishing candidate for such a small town. Worcester I have seen only as an accessory to cricket on the box. Peterborough... St Alban's, Rochester... sorry, chaps; but top of the second division. The ninth place is a neck-and-neck contest between Gloucester and Hereford.

Gloucester has a lot going for it. Its western approaches up the banks of the Severn provide one of the greatest distant prospects. The transition from the Romanesque nave into that soaring choir, to dazzle the eyes with an east window as big as a tennis court, but glazed five centuries before they invented lawn tennis, is a parable of what it is going to be like to ascend into Heaven, should we be so lucky. Robert of Normandy still has his legs crossed jauntily. The image and environs of Gloucester Cathedral are imprinted on the English memory by the third most influential of all nursery books, *The Tailor of Gloucester*.

Nevertheless, I am sorry to have to tell you that Hereford takes the tenth place in the first division. I could explain why. But it would be more persuasive for you to go and have another look for yourself, preferably as the bright sun sets, and paints the queue of *the Welsh* marches every soft shade of pink and red.



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BIG SPENDER

Mr Martin Feldstein, the departing chairman of President Reagan's Council of Economic Advisers, has done his bit to change the Washington climate of opinion against America's large federal deficit. Only Mr Donald Regan, the President's Treasury Secretary, continues to insist that the budget deficit is the United States' gift to the world economy - and nothing to do with rising American interest rates. President Reagan himself, it seems, has come to see the budget deficit as something of an electoral liability.

This conversion is welcome; but as the week's events have shown, dangerously late. Although Mr Reagan has requested, and Congress may even deliver, a down-payment on his budget-cutting plans before the presidential election, the present reality is that the federal government is still pumping huge sums into a fast-expanding economy. The most recent rise in interest rates is the Federal Reserve Board's response to faster-than-expected economic expansion, which makes the budget deficit all the more inflammatory. Those of the President's men who criticize the Fed's chairman, Mr Paul Volcker, for applying the financial brakes are like a bunch of pyromaniacs who complain that the fire brigade has ruined their carpets.

America's trading partners do not, by and large, criticise the Fed: they lay the blame for rising interest rates squarely at the door of the White House. Their first complaint is that European interest rates have to follow suit, a consequence about which the Germans are particularly bitter. They believe that a rise in interest rates now will damage economic recovery in general and Germany's progress towards structural reinvestment in particular.

To this criticism the Americans have two defences. First,

that the Europeans do not need to follow suit, and should turn all their brave talk about "decoupling" interest rates into action. When the Europeans report that they can stand only so much of an exchange-rate decline against the dollar, the Americans deploy their second defence: that dollar strength merely reflects economic vitality. It is the golden investment opportunities in the vibrant American economy, say the President's men, that attract capital inflows and push up the dollar - not the crude lure of high American interest rates.

Admittedly, the American economy is working, adjusting and investing more productively than Europe. The dollar is strengthened by the cutback in capital outflows from the United States, which has virtually given up investing in ailing European economies.

But much of the inflow into the United States takes the form of short-term financial deposits, and interest rates have had to rise way above European levels to suck in enough of them to plug the hole in the federal government's finances.

This quarrel between Europe and America has been going on so long that it has virtually fallen off the end of the agenda for next month's London economic summit. The hope had been that general recovery - world output has been accelerating for two years - would induce optimism, unanimity and a concentration on longer-term issues, such as trade liberalisation and "structural" adjustment to technological change. The rise in interest rates has forced on to the agenda an issue several governments had sought to avoid: the nagging problem of third-world debt.

America's summit colleagues in Europe and Japan are united in their concern about the impact of higher interest rates on

developing countries, or rather on their ability to buy western goods and repay western debt. Too much of this debt is denominated in dollars, at variable interest rates, so that each one percentage point rise adds \$3.5 billion to developing countries' interest burden. In the last resort, this problem forces its own solution: already, the banks are having to rearrange their loans in order to reduce debt payments by as much as \$40 billion this year, and much of the extra interest burden will probably go the same rescheduled way.

But the strain of this on western banks - particularly on American banks - is becoming acute. Perhaps it would be no bad thing if one of the many restructuring negotiations finally collapsed under the strain, providing banks and borrowers with real experience as to whether sovereign default is always worse than cumulative rescheduling. But rising interest rates would be the worst precipitating cause; they penalise those who are trying to put their house in order quite as much as the improvident, and handicap the return to world financial stability.

Many technical schemes designed to lessen the impact of high interest rates are being drawn up for the summiters. None of these palliatives compares with a cure of the fundamental American problem. Yet even with the President on board, the cause of budgetary reform proceeds agonisingly slowly. He is now paying the price of past complacency: a credit crunch and a missed opportunity to cut his deficit at the earliest moment, which is when economic growth is strongest. All he can do now is strengthen the political conviction that his cuts package is only the first of many. Changing tack in election year may be difficult, but vacillation has its proven disadvantages.

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

By most accounts President Reagan's televised address on the subject of Central America was a considerable political triumph. It was skillfully presented, dramatic in detail and forceful in the simple message it conveyed about the dangers to American security posed by Soviet, Cuban and Nicaraguan subversion in Central America. On the political level, it seems likely to have achieved a more solid bi-partisan approach to Central American issues than the President might have expected in election year, certainly to judge from the tenuous bi-partisanship evident when the Kissinger recommendations were published earlier this year. Beyond creating an atmosphere of bi-partisanship, however, it also appears from Speaker O'Neill's initial response to the broadcast that the President will now secure some Congressional movement in support of those recommendations. There will thus be further aid for Salvador, though not for the Nicaraguan groups who are fighting the revolutionary government in Managua. Support for them will not have been made any easier by yesterday's preliminary decision of the International Court at the Hague which called on the United States to cease its assistance for military activity against the Sandinista government.

In electoral terms the President's advisers will have cause to be happy with such a bi-partisan result. They have been troubled by the evidence that the Central American issue causes concern among voters. That is partly because voters do not understand what the issue is about and partly because they fear that, whatever the issue is, it could lead to an unwelcome entanglement of American forces.

The President did not mince his words about the issue. He portrayed it as one in which Soviet, then Cuban and now Nicaraguan efforts are directed to subverting Central America and undermining the security of the United States. Why should the presence of communist revolutionary regimes in Cuba and Nicaragua necessarily do that? It is because they are quite open about their intention to export their revolution.

However, beyond that potential interference with supplies (which poses the same threat to Europe since much of Nato's replenishment in a crisis would travel the same route) there is another spectre, briefly but significantly mentioned by the President. He referred to the fact that subversion in Salvador had caused 400,000 refugees. There are another 800,000 refugees all over Central America.

"Concerns about the prospect

of hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing communist oppression to seek entry into our country are well founded", Mr Reagan said. Compared to the private misgivings in the Administration that was an understatement. Officials fear that continuing subversion of the 100 million people who live between the Panama Canal and the US/Mexican border could provoke a massive domestic upheaval within the United States itself. They think that it is only a matter of time before Central American stability creates an influx of refugees travelling north through Mexico which could amount to millions if the instability had by then also infected Mexico. Such an influx could not be tolerated within the United States, but since the border with Mexico is currently manned by only 600 customs officials, how could it be prevented? The Administration calculates that it would take at least eight divisions to police such a border properly in conditions of major social disturbance.

America's allies in Nato might ponder seriously on the fact that there is only one place those divisions could come from: Europe. Such a strategic prize as the American detachment from Europe would be well worth the 5 billion dollar annual subsidy which the Soviet Union currently extends to Cuba.

existing structures. They are also somewhat more eclectic and tolerant, ostensibly less concerned with general doctrines than with action on issues.

This is both their strength and their weakness. They have gathered support from many different parts of the political spectrum, from the far left, the centre and from the old traditions of German conservatism, all of them more or less united against acid rain, nuclear weapons and President Reagan. Yet because they distrust organization they have not been good at organizing. Because they distrust power they have cut down their leaders. Because they distrust politics they have handicapped their elected representatives. And because they have gathered so many disparate elements in their broad embrace they have had to contain a lot of disagreement.

They are true heirs of the radical tradition in all this, and especially in their distrust of conventional politics. To the extent that the Greens are less violent, destructive and dogmatic than the students of 1968 they are a great improvement. They provide some valuable yeast in the system. But it is still reassuring that the voters feel their contribution belongs on the fringe rather than at the centre.

IT WAS LATE SIXTY-EIGHT . . .

At first it sounds like a change: "Danny the Red becomes a Green". In fact it is not a long journey across the political spectrum. Herr Daniel Cohn-Bendit who has now joined the Green Party in West Germany, was a prominent figure in the student movement of 1968, but in spite of his nickname he was never a communist or Marxist in any orthodox sense. He was an anarchist, a non-believer in institutions, a radical by temperament more than logic, as disdainful of the ossified bureaucracies of the Soviet block as he was of the allegedly oppressive structures of Western capitalism. A few of his contemporaries moved on into terrorism but most merged into conventional life, acquiring jobs, families and orthodox views. He, however, remained faithful to the fringe and this now enables him, at the advanced age of 38, to step across easily from the protests of the past to those of the present, once again making headlines, though this time smaller.

How big is his step? Are the Greens the natural heirs of the students of 1968? Although their concerns are different there are many strands that link them. The student revolts which spread around the world in 1968 had specific roots in each country but they had in common a restless,

Fair play for all in Olympics

From Sir Richard J. Kelly

Sir, The Soviet boycott certainly need not bring about the demise of the Olympic movement, but it does give an opportunity for a reappraisal of the organization of the games.

The two major faults of the games at present are, first, that they are so large and unwieldy as to make it very difficult for any city to provide adequate facilities; secondly, that they are susceptible to political pressures of the kind which we are now witnessing. May I make some suggestions?

The Olympic Games should be a contest between individuals. If all team sports were dropped from the programme this would have the effect of lessening the element of nationalism which has developed over the years.

As competitors would be taking part as individuals there would be no national teams and no parade of nations at the opening ceremony. There would be no boycott of individual competitors because of the political attitudes of their homelands, over which they have no control and with which they may violently disagree.

Dropping team sports from the programme would go some way towards reducing the size of the games. Another desirable step would be to retain only those events in which performance is measurable in terms of time, distance, height, weight, hits on target.

No sport should be contemplated which relies on assessment by judges of "technique" or "artistic impression". Such sports would continue, of course, to organize their own world championships, but they should have no place in the Olympics.

I believe that these changes would make for a viable and independent Olympic games.

Yours faithfully,

R. J. KELLY,
Brooklands House,
Morningside,
Harlow, Essex.

Missing the boat

From Mr R. G. R. Calvert

Sir, In your leading article, "Selling Sealink short" (May 1), no mention is made that it was the former railway companies that acquired and developed ports and sea services as a very legitimate extension of their transport systems. On the short routes to the Continent it was, and in my opinion still should be, vital to maintain continuity of service, "rail-sea-rail", with properly co-ordinated connections.

We may yet be thankful that the share of shipping belonging to the French railway company, SNCF, will remain under railway control. Incidentally, SNCF is no more subsidized than is British Rail if the subvention is related to the traffic carried and to the size of the system. If Sealink, and some say the railways, may be sold off by auction, why does the nation not also sell the highway system (all of it)? The exchequer income need not suffer as, apart from a return on the capital value, the new owners would become liable to corporation tax and to local rates.

If British Rail may not keep a profitable subsidiary, allowable in the private sector, why should, for example, the British Broadcasting Corporation be allowed to retain its publishing department (books, recordings, tapes) and the shops through which they are sold? Yours faithfully,
R. G. R. CALVERT,
15 The Parade,
Truro, Cornwall.

Correcting the record

From Mr Peter Grafton

Sir, At the not inconsiderable risk of irritating GWR enthusiasts I must draw your attention to two inaccuracies in the article on Swindon works (May 1).

Reference is made to the "record" created by 3440 City of Truro and your reporter perpetuates the myth that this was the first locomotive to exceed 100 mph in this country. This is manifestly untrue as there is little or no evidence to prove that 3440 was travelling at any speed other than very quickly.

The first authenticated speed in excess of 100 mph goes to the credit of former LNER Pacific 4472 Flying Scotsman and this record was created during the course of a trip from King's Cross to Leeds and return in 1934.

Your reporter further noted that 3440 was designed by G. J. Churchward. It was in fact designed by William Dean. Yours truly,
PETER GRAFTON,
1 Whitstone Road, Fingleton,
Devon.

'Isis' then and now

From Mr Peter Gillman

Sir, Your informant, Edward Mortimer, is sadly at fault in his memories, reported in *The Times* Diary on April 25, of the *Isis* National launched when Robert Maxwell became owner in 1963.

I was the first editor, not Geoffrey James and the scheme had considerable success. We increased the print run from 1,000 to 5,000 and several issues sold out completely, including one devoted to Joseph Losey's film *The Servant*, which became a collector's item.

The scheme may have flopped after my departure, but during my editorship Maxwell promoted it with much verve. In view of his possible future as a national newspaper proprietor, it is also worth pointing out that Maxwell guaranteed *Isis* complete editorial independence.

Yours sincerely,
PETER GILLMAN,
21 Westminster Road, SE25,
May 1.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Industry finds trainees wanting

From Sir Kenneth Corfield

Sir, The more Britain moves towards a knowledge-based society the more education becomes the key to future wealth creation. The world belongs to those who understand this and act upon it.

There are over three million registered unemployed in Britain today. Perhaps as many as half of the total unemployed are under 25. Paradoxically - and tragically - many British companies are constrained in their growth by skill shortages. These are especially severe in the electronics industry and in other sectors requiring electronics and related skills.

We need electronics engineers, test technicians, systems analysts, technical authors, design, development and sales engineers, applications engineers. We also need mechanical engineers to design the tools of the manufacturing plant.

Britain spends less per head on education and allocates a significantly lower percentage of total spending to vocational education than most of her major international competitors. There is thus a correspondingly lower proportion of skilled people entering the work population.

It also explains why individuals find it difficult to train in the face of change. Retraining demands higher general levels of education because it imparts basic conceptual and learning capabilities.

Britain also has less full-time enrolments in higher education than her major industrial competitors. Annual entry to higher education as a percentage of the relevant age group in 1975 was 22 per cent compared to 28 per cent in France, over 30 per cent in Italy and 40 per cent in Japan. The number of trainees in manufacturing is now barely half the level of the mid-sixties.

Mr Kinnock's company

From Mr Douglas Eden

Sir, In your April 28 leader, "The company they keep", you depicted accurately and effectively the communist associations and objectives of Mr Arthur Scargill. These are well known, but your description of Mr Neil Kinnock as a moderate manoeuvred into sharing platforms with communists is surely too generous. Labour's leader has had much experience of such platforms.

There is a great deal of evidence to indicate a coincidence of ideas between Mr Kinnock and Mr Scargill. For instance, what could Labour's leader have meant when he told the *Broad Left Alliance Journal* 18 months ago, "I must emphasise that there is nothing in the Labour Party constitution that could or should prevent people from holding opinions which favour Leninist-Trotskyism"?

It is not significant that Mr Kinnock is the only Labour MP ever to serve on the Labour Research Department's executive committee? The LRD is not part of the Labour Party. It is a classic front organisation under communist control since the 1920s and the majority of Mr Kinnock's colleagues on both the executive and its editorial board, including the secretary, are members of the Communist Party.

Why should a moderate upholder of liberal democracy agree to be a sponsor of the Friends of Afghanistan Society, a front organisation set up after the Soviet coup to mobilise opinion in favour of the puppet regime in Kabul? Mr Kinnock's fellow sponsors include a past chairman (and present member) of the British Communist Party's Executive Committee.

Closing an Irish gap

From Sir Patrick Macrory

Sir, Last week, by invitation, I went to Ulster to address the Annual Conference of Local Authorities of Northern Ireland. These are the district councils, the only tier of local government that now exists in the province. Above them there is only what you, Sir, have named "the Macrory gap", which I find flattering but embarrassing, because many people have jumped to the conclusion that it was Macrory who created that gap.

You did your best to correct that impression in your recent leader (April 28) in which you surmised the present position succinctly and accurately.

My theme at the conference last week was, as it has long been the urgent need to close the Macrory gap by restoring the major local government services in Ulster to local democratic control. This was also the theme of the Ulster Unionist Assembly Party's recent discussion paper, *The Way Forward*. Although you dismissed this paper rather contemptuously as "the Unionist's pennyworth", I do submit that it is at the local government level that we can best make a start to secure co-operation between the majority and the minority.

Queue for service

From Sir Robert Lusty

Sir, Greater productivity, we are for ever being told, is the answer to most of our problems. In whose interest such may ultimately be is seldom questioned.

Certainly the productivity in many aspects and of many activities in this considerable north Cotswold village (with its thriving small industries centre) is much enhanced by the excellent postal service it has enjoyed, serviced admirably within its own community and now under threat by the postal moguls of distant Worcester in another county.

They seem worried, not about the service they are employed to promote, but the productivity of

The ability to be trained and retrain is intrinsic to career patterns today and increasingly depends upon the length and levels of initial education and access to continuous education and training.

Piecemeal changes to the education and training system have been made for the past century. No expression has yet been given, however, to society's increasing recognition that a fundamental overhaul of the total education and training system is needed if Britain is to remain internationally competitive and rich in culture.

Structures have to be found which will make the system directly responsive to the market but without damaging the pure research part of the fabric.

Two prior conditions have to be met to achieve this: the steady integration of the education and training system in recognition of their increasing interdependency and multi-sources of funding for education and training established in such a way that individuals can have access to different resources to support themselves and the cost of their education according to need. Education institutions, too, should have access to the funds they need from a similar variety of sources.

May I add my voice, therefore, to those calling for a new commission into education and training, which will look across not just the sectors governed by the University Grants Committee and the National Advisory Body, but the whole fabric of secondary and tertiary education and training.

Yours faithfully,
KENNETH CORFIELD,
Chairman and Chief Executive,
Standard Telephones and Cables plc,
STC House,
190 Strand, WC2,
May 9.

Mr Kinnock has worked with two other communist fronts and helped the Communist Party's newspaper, the *Morning Star*, campaign to increase its readership. He is a member of the Institute for Workers' Control, a Eurocommunist-run gathering point for Marxist-Leninists and related ideologues from all parties and groups of the far left.

Labour's leader does draw the line at those followers of Trotsky who do not support his leadership. His criticism of the Militant Tendency shows there are limits to Mr Kinnock's broad church, but this is in line with Lenin's condemnation of "left-wing communism" as an "infantile disorder".

All these organisations, to which Mr Kinnock has lent the distinction of being sponsored, supported and served by a leading member of a democratically elected Parliament, were official anathema to the Labour Party before 1973. However they may be described, no taxonomist of revolutionary socialism would ever refer to them as "soft left" or "moderate".

It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that Mr Kinnock's differences with Mr Scargill are tactical rather than ideological. Because Mr Kinnock is in opposition and Mr Scargill occupies a position of power, the parliamentary road to revolutionary socialism has had to defer to the industrial road - as eight years ago, Mr Mikardo had to defer to Jack Jones, albeit angrily and resentfully. Moderation has nothing to do with it.

Yours faithfully,
J. D. EDEN,
20 Shepherds Hill,
Highgate, N6,
May 5.

A regional council on the Scottish model, with executive local government powers, would have no prime minister or Cabinet. It would work on the committee system and on each committee, Education, Health, Planning, etc. each of the political parties would be represented in proportion to its strength as a whole.

It might well be that the minority parties would be given the chairmanship of some of these committees, as Brian Faulkner offered them years ago in the Stormont days. Here, surely, is the road to real and meaningful power-sharing. The present Assembly is there, ready and waiting to be converted into a regional council such as I am suggesting.

Moreover, I feel that Irish of different political persuasions may talk more sense when debating a practical issue, such as the need for a recreation park or a new main drain in Limavady, than when they are getting worked up over the ancient wrongs of Kathleen-ni-Houlihan or engaging in heated debates as to whether the Maiden City is to be called Londonderry (its name for nearly 400 years) or Derry.

Yours sincerely,
PATRICK MACRORY,
The Athenaeum,
Pall Mall, SW1,
May 8.

Queue for service

Sir, Greater productivity, we are for ever being told, is the answer to most of our problems. In whose interest such may ultimately be is seldom questioned.

Certainly the productivity in many aspects and of many activities in this considerable north Cotswold village (with its thriving small industries centre) is much enhanced by the excellent postal service it has enjoyed, serviced admirably within its own community and now under threat by the postal moguls of distant Worcester in another county.

They seem worried, not about the service they are employed to promote, but the productivity of

African alms from the armed forces

From Dr Alec Dickson

Sir, Armed forces in Africa are unlikely to be disbanded in the next decade or be reduced to a combat strength of some 5,000, as Charles Meynell urges (feature, May 1). But they could, here and now, make a formidable contribution to problems which seem insoluble by any other agency.

The youngsters, unemployed and virtually homeless, who cluster around filling stations with outstretched begging bowls - how can they be helped? Not by alms, but by the army, illiterate for the greater part, they will never be accepted in any vocational centre. Yet the motor transport section of any military unit could quickly impart to them the practical skills to set themselves up in business as roadside menders of cycles; and any Signals Corps unit or the equivalent of our REME could teach them to repair radios, sewing machines or air conditioners. There is no need in peacetime for Medical Corps units to run static military hospitals; sick soldiers can be cared for in civilian wards. With their ambulances they could respond to the horrendous traffic accidents that occur so frequently in Africa - and gain experience in treating wounds as grave as those encountered amongst battle casualties.

With their facilities for refrigeration they could deliver vaccines to village clinics, helping immunisation programmes and campaigns against tetanus, diphtheria, polio, smallpox, TB and measles. They could provide the logistic back-up for drives against bilharzia, malaria, river blindness, sleeping sickness and yaws.

Such a role would keep them on their toes. Hospital work can easily become routinised, whilst disaster relief and field operations call for quick responses. There is a functional as well as a linguistic connection between mobility and mobilisation.

In the Sahel and other drought-stricken areas only a massive deployment of an army's whole Corps of Engineers - aided perhaps by Education Corps personnel to still peasants' apprehensions and secure their cooperation - can cope with the well-begging and irrigation tasks which are going beyond the capacity of a provincial agricultural department. Even the attachment of just a couple of sappers to a community self-help scheme could result in culverts, water tanks and small bridges being tackled by villagers. By becoming soldiers without enemies on the home front, their capacity to deal with external aggression is strengthened, not weakened.

Many senior officers from foreign defence forces attend Staff College courses in this country. Do we involve them in such exercises (in which British forces have a proud record) or just make a passing reference to them in a single lecture? Do our defence attachés ever hint that, apart from the provision of technical hardware, we have experience in military aid to the civil community?

ALEC DICKSON,
19 Blenheim Road, W4,
May 4.

Liverpool heritage

From the Chief Executive of the English Tourist Board

Sir, On visiting the International Garden Festival at Liverpool one is impressed and excited by the newly created three-dimensional landscape with structures. This is a unique collection of the best work of our leading landscape designers and contractors. We have a new bit of heritage.

This part of the site should be made a conservation area at once. In this way we can retain for the stimulation and enjoyment of future generations examples of current landscape design at least as valuable as the groupings of nineteenth-century architecture we protect.

As with architecture, we cannot protect landscape without making arrangements for its future maintenance and use. This site cannot remain as a garden festival, but it could be the setting for other human activities compatible with its character.

How nice it is to feel that as a nation we can still create and look after additions to our heritage of the highest quality.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW THORBURN,
Chief Executive,
English Tourist Board,
4 Grosvenor Gardens, SW1,
May 4.

Slanging the Japanese

From Canon A. J. Bennett

Sir, The IBA is wrong to censure the comedian who referred to the Japanese as Nips (report, May 5). In the Singapore prison camp where I spent 3½ years our captors told us we must always refer to them as Nipponese, never as Japanese. The Anglican Church in Japan has always been the Nippon-Sei-Ko Kai.

Yours faithfully,
A. J. BENNETT,
4 Kyton Cottages,
Hengrave,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk,
May 5.

Landscaping and BR

From Dr J. C. Moore-Gillon

Sir, Miss Rosemary Bashford (May 8) observes that "many stopping trains travel slowly enough for an observant onlooker to watch nature at work". She will be pleased to know that British Rail also regularly offers this valuable recreational and educational opportunity on Inter-City services.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MOORE-GILLON,
47 Elmwood Road, SE24,
May 8.

FINANCE AND INDUSTRY

Executive Editor Kenneth Fleet

First mayday calls reach the equity market

Are interest rates likely to go higher? As I indicated here yesterday, it is hard to see why they should not. Can an already high equity market hold its ground, let alone capture more in the face of rising fixed-interest yields? It would be prudent to prepare for a fall in the market, perhaps by as much as 150 points in the FT 30 share index.

What effect would tacky gilt-edged prices and softening ordinary share prices have on the Government's funding and privatization programmes? They would make the former more difficult and throw a long shadow over the British Telecom issue. Even in the most enthusiastic market, because of its size and novel quality, Telecom would be a formidable trial for sponsoring underwriters and investors alike.

Finally, will these chilly winds from the financial market blow the economic recovery and Mrs Thatcher's strategy off course? It is too soon to say, save to note that a weak pound and the rising cost of credit have an unwanted bearing on the 'future rate of inflation. Reflecting such thoughts, index-linked gilt-edged stocks are back in vogue, moving up three-eighths yesterday.

The gilt-edged market as a whole yesterday recovered some of its poise, whole equities, aware of the imminent close of the current Stock Exchange account, looked both weary and wary. The Bank of England raised its dealing rates (in band four) by half a point to 8%, but this is still around a point below three and six months interbank rates. The new 4% stock, 9% Treasury Convertible, at 48½ is stranded 1½ below its issue price. If the Government Broker is to sell stock before the end of the banking month on Wednesday, then he will presumably lower the price.

The US bond market is fractured by even greater uncertainty. Wednesday's ten-year auction went badly and the result of the 30-year auction is awaited with some trepidation. Both British and US Governments currently face the same problem: raising money. If yesterday's rumours about the deep water into which one of the US banks has fallen (or rather fallen further) are true, then the storm cones would turn into mayday signals.

Meanwhile Dr Henry Kaufman of Salomon Brothers was reiterating his forecast that interest rates are unlikely to fall this year, and will probably rise again next year. Speaking in London to an investment seminar for fund managers he repeated his argument that the only discipline in financial markets at the moment is interest rates. Unless, therefore, the United States government acted to cut its budget deficit, interest rates would have to rise further.

Dr Kaufman's presence in London was part of Salomon's pitch to sell its fixed rate services to managers of multi-currency funds. The firm makes no bones about its ambition to become the world's biggest force in research and trading in fixed interest stocks. To that end it has embarked upon an elaborate research

The Times 1984 Budget briefing

The briefing will take place at the Dorchester Hotel on May 22, with myself as chairman. The principal speaker is Mr John Moore, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, who will explain the strategic thinking behind the Chancellor's radical tax reforms. Information may be obtained and bookings made by telephoning 01-405 3501 (24 hours).

NEWS IN BRIEF

Shell raises stake in US offshoot

Royal Dutch-Shell's \$5.5 billion (nearly £4 billion) bid for the 30.5 per cent of its American arm it does not already own has been accepted by shareholders representing more than 64 million shares. The bid, which has run into fierce opposition from some shareholders of Shell Oil Co has been extended to May 23. Royal Dutch, which was forced to increase its offer from \$55 a share to \$58, says it will not buy any shares at above \$58 for 18 months.

● DEBENHAMS is set to show that the department store business can survive in the 21st century but much more as a financial services conglomerate on the lines of Sears Roebuck in the US. Profits last year were up from £19.6m to £32.7m, with a big boost from the Wellbeck Finance credit business. The company is now gearing up to use Wellbeck's strength to start a new range of financial and property services. It hopes to sign the deal with Harris Queensway within two months. *Tempus, page 20*

● Ward White, the footwear retailing group, has increased pretax profits for the year to January 1984 to £8.8m from £5.3m. Turnover went up from £136.2m to £179.4m. The final dividend of 3.39p makes 4.93p for the year against 4.48p last time. *Tempus, page 20*

programme designed to identify for fund managers the best opportunities in bond markets.

The research will cover the US dollar, the yen, the Deutschmark, the Canadian dollar, among others. Salomon is treading carefully before selling its gilts services in London. While the City is in the throes of reorganization, this may be wise.

Pensions untouched for the time being

Takeovers aside, the rumour that the Chancellor was about to stand up and insert a new clause in the Finance Bill to remove tax relief for lump-sum pension payments has caused more widespread and instant panic among respectable folk in the City than almost any other in recent years. Insurance companies were preparing to keep staff until midnight to beat the deadline. *The Times* has investigated this rumour more than once and found nothing in it. Without pointing any fingers, it must be said that some accountants and insurance companies seem to have made a lot of money from panic deals by pensioners.

Mr Peter Rees, the Chief Secretary, finally scotched the immediate rumour in the Commons yesterday. It would, have been preposterous for the Treasury and the Inland Revenue to have hurried forward such a drastic and far-reaching proposal when Mr Norman Fowler at the Department of Health and Social Security is in the middle of weighing all the evidence given to his broad pensions inquiry. But as MPs and insurance men were pointing out yesterday, this does not mean the end of the matter. A change is a runner for next year's Budget.

Mr Fowler's Green Paper on personal portable pensions (PPP), the first product of the pensions inquiry, is likely to be published next month. It will be a cautious document, bowing to the weight of evidence from the pensions lobby and the trade unions. It may offer the pensions only as an add-on for those committed to company pension schemes a timid step that would add little to consumer choice.

However, any extension of the present self-employed pension arrangements to employees would give the opportunity to question tax relief.

The possibility of commuting pension rights into a tax-free lump sum softens this harsh regime. It is the annuity element rather than the cash element of pensions that we should be questioning.

Breaking into broking

Some major institutions are now thinking in terms of forming their own broking houses with poached staff and new technology. This is looking the superior alternative to buying interests in existing firms, whose technology is not so new, at a premium. A precedent was set by America's Prudential-Bache Corporation which formed a London broking firm with staff lured from James Capel.

Stock Exchange rules allow personal but not corporate membership but in the Stock Exchange Council's discussion document, corporate membership is a question of when rather than if. This prospect may be very much in the mind of Lloyds Bank, the only clearer not yet to have formed a broking partnership. The bank remains tight-lipped about reports that it is exploring this avenue, talking to dynamic partners of some not-so-dynamic firms. Lloyds would say only that it is exploring "all avenues for expansion".

Seagram buys 155 off-licences

By Derek Pain

Seagram Co., the world's biggest drinks group, is emerging as a powerful force in Britain's highly competitive off-licence trade. Yesterday it announced that it was paying £7.5m to Scottish & Newcastle Breweries for its 155 Gough Brothers shops which are mainly in London and the Home Counties.

Last month the Canadian-based Seagram acquired for

£3.7m 75 per cent of the 57-outlet Oddbins chain of wine shops.

Mr Ivan Straker, the chairman of Seagram, said he was not discussing any further takeovers at the moment. But he added: "I believe in consolidating before launching a new offensive."

S & N's decision to sell Gough, which it acquired for £4.2m in 1979, came at a time when other breweries are

increasing their off-licence presence.

Two regional breweries, each with significant off-licence interests, announced interim profits yesterday. Grampian Whitley, the largest of the regionals, reported figures of £10.5m against just under £9m and a dividend up 7.45 per cent to 1.92p a share. Vaux Breweries, based at Sunderland, announced profits of £4,353,000 against £4,185,000. The dividend is 3.4p (3.025p).

Price rises for UK 'among Europe's lowest'

Survey refutes power protests

By Edward Townsend, Industrial Correspondent

Complaints from British industry, particularly the high energy users like steel and chemicals, that their electricity costs are among the highest in Europe receive scant support in the latest world survey conducted by the American-based National Utility Services.

This shows that commercial and industrial power costs in Britain last month varied among the nine electricity boards from 3.45p to 3.6p per kilowatt hour, significantly less than the 3.7p to 4.56p per kilowatt hour charged in West Germany.

Electricité de France charged its business customers 2.95p per kilowatt hour, about 10p less than in Britain, but Belgium's industrial electricity is 3.76p, the Dutch 3.57p (compared to the UK) and the Italian 4.44p.

The NUS survey, covering 750,000 business locations, reveals that only four countries of the 12 in the study - Canada,

"although any increase during a government 'price freeze' is hardly welcome."

In Belgium, industrial consumers have experienced the third largest price for electricity in the NUS survey - a retail price increase of 6.9 per cent. During the 12 months, Belgian oil and other feedstock costs fell by 3 per cent.

The highest electricity price increase was in Canada - 10.1 per cent - followed by Ireland with 9.2 per cent. Britain's average increase of 3.5 per cent was beaten only by Germany's 1.5 per cent. French industry paid 6.5 per cent more, the Italians 6.2 per cent more and the Swedes almost 5 per cent more.

Mr Roger Nicholls, a NUS spokesman, said that stable or lower oil prices had contributed to steadier retail and electricity prices, particularly in countries where oil was a major generation feedstock.

Discount house and merchant bank join City shake-up

By Christopher Dunn and Wayne Lintott

Two of the City's most respected houses, Baring Brothers and Gerrard and National, yesterday revealed separate plans for each to take part in the revolution in financial services.

Gerrard and National, possibly the City's largest discount house, plans an aggressive three into gilt-edged jobbing, as well as a series of international moves, to benefit from the changing structure of London's financial institutions, the group revealed yesterday.

Mr Roger Gibbs, the chairman of Gerrard, which earlier this year was linked with a mystery suitor in abortive bid talks, said yesterday: "It would be logical to extend our market-making activities beyond the area of short assets into the full spectrum of gilt-edged. This we intend to do, and over the next

year we will be building a team for this purpose."

Gerrard's moves come some weeks after Clive Discount announced a rather more modest sortie into gilt-edged jobbing which may involve Stock Exchange membership.

The group, which denied that it is currently discussing merger business, is keen to expand existing trading connexions with both the US and Japan.

It is possible that the group is hoping to develop into a fully fledged international dealing operation in the medium term, expanding by acquisitions and by organic growth.

Profits for the year to April 5, 1984, fell from £14m to £10m. The group has also transferred more than £5m from hidden reserves to cover adjustments in the Gerrard leasing business, arising from the Chancellor's recent legislation. Since the year

end, the group has sold its gilt-edged book and scaled down both the size and length of its total portfolio.

Baring Brothers & Co., London's oldest merchant bank, yesterday made a tentative move into the City's changing structure by buying the Far-East business of the stockbrokers Henderson Crosthwaite, for an undisclosed sum.

The agreement is subject to clearance by the regulatory authorities, particularly the Ministry of Finance in Japan, because Baring wants to change Henderson's representative office into a full branch office able to trade as a broker in Tokyo.

The Tokyo office at present supplies only information and research, but a branch office would enable Baring to deal at cheaper commissions and begin moving into the Japanese equity and bond markets.

Mr John Dare, the Baring executive dealing with the agreement, admitted that as the new company would be incorporated in London, a logical extension to its business would be an application for corporate membership of the London Stock Exchange, when the new rules permit.

Henderson's senior partner, Mr Andrew Barlow, said the decision to sell the Hongkong partnership - the whole team will move to Baring - arose partly as a result of increasing competition in London, particularly after the link between Vickers de Costa and Citicorp and the expansion of Rowe and Putnam.

● Morgan Grenfell, the merchant bank, has announced the formation of a Hongkong subsidiary, providing financial advisory services from June.

Reuters names trustees

By Philip Robinson

The trustees responsible for keeping Reuters independent when the news and business information agency goes public next month were named yesterday.

The four new trustees are Mr John Freeman, former chairman of London Weekend Television and a former British Ambassador in Washington; Professor Lord McGregor of Durris, chairman of the Advertising Standards Authority and a former chairman of the Royal Commission on the Press; Mr Kenneth Morgan, director of the Press Council and former General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists and Mr Kingman Brewster, a former US Ambassador to Britain and former president of Yale University.

Of the remaining ten trustees, from the Press Association are Mr Stanley Clarke, chairman and managing director of the International Thomson Organisation, Mr Gordon Linacre, deputy chairman and chief executive of United Newspapers, and Mr Jack Wallwork, a director of the Daily Mail and General Trust.

From the Newspaper Publishers' Association: Lord Hartwell, chairman and editor-in-chief of the Daily Telegraph, Lord Matthews, chairman of Fleet Holdings and Express Newspapers, Mr Clive Thornton, chairman of Mirror Group Newspapers and Viscount Rothermere, chairman of Associated Newspapers.

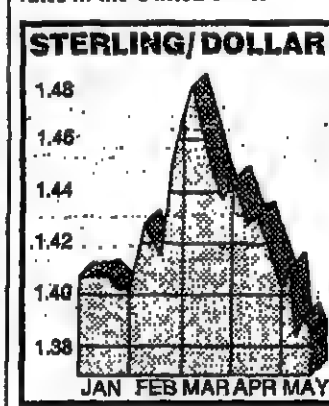
Sterling touches \$1.3750

By William Kay, City Editor

The pound hit yet another low against the dollar yesterday, tumbling 1½ cents to \$1.3750. But by the close of trading in London, it recovered to \$1.3850, thanks to intervention by European central banks and late nervousness concerning reported difficulties at Continental Illinois Bank.

In the House, the Chancellor, Mr Nigel Lawson, said at Treasury question time that there were "signs of a welcome change in the attitude of the US administration towards their deficit". Nevertheless, he said, the US deficit would be on the agenda at the economic summit in London next month.

Mr Lawson added: "The rise in US interest rates is unwelcome, but it is not a bitter blow. There will always be fluctuations, particularly with what is happening in America. We cannot be wholly immune to what is happening to interest rates in the United States."



Sir Michael Herries, pictured outside the Royal Bank's Edinburgh headquarters: "Further tax provision needed"

£56m interim profit for Royal Bank

By Graham Searjeant, Financial Editor

The Royal Bank and Lloyds Bank are now likely to reach a rapid deal over their shareholding dispute as a result of a series of unexpected blows to their jointly owned finance company Lloyds and Scottish.

Its profits for the six months to March, previously on a rising trend, have fallen from £11.7m to £3m partly as a result of continuing bad and doubtful debt provisions. More seriously, Lloyds and Scottish has been obliged to write off £78.4m, some 30 per cent of its capital, to provide more for deferred taxation for leasing operations in the wake of the Chancellor's moves to phase out capital allowances. The little-traded Lloyds and Scottish shares fell 10p to 130p yesterday.

Lloyds increased its stake in the Royal Bank of Scotland from 16 to 21 per cent last year as part of its continuing plans to buy the Royal Bank's 39 per cent stake in Lloyds and Scottish. The Department of Trade has until mid-June to decide whether to refer this to the Monopolies Commission.

Negotiations over the future of Lloyds and Scottish have so far foundered over the price. But the twin setbacks to the finance company are likely to have made the Royal Bank

more flexible and anxious to negotiate a swift deal that will involve Lloyds making a bid for the whole of Lloyds and Scottish and financing the deal by selling some and possibly all its shares in the Royal Bank.

Meanwhile, the Royal Bank of Scotland itself has turned in a sparkling performance in the six months to March with pretax profits up from £31.2m to £56.8m and an interim dividend lifted from 3p to 3.3p.

Although the first half of the previous year was particularly poor, the Royal Bank has achieved an increase in its gross interest margins from 3.2 to 3.5 per cent. It has also done more business, increasing its assets by 14 per cent and its net interest income by 17 per cent, despite problems in its dollar business.

The charge for bad and doubtful debts is also down from £24m to £17m, reflecting a relatively early recovery in the Scottish economy. Profits for the full year to September are expected to rise from £95.5m to about £120m.

However, the Royal Bank will have to make an estimated £90m provision for deferred taxation on the same principles as the big four clearing banks.

£20m loss for Royal Insurance

By Andrew Cornelius

Royal Insurance plunged into loss in the first quarter of this year after suffering a £28m increase in weather losses to £45m compared with the same period in 1983.

The group, which is one of Britain's largest composite insurers, reported pretax losses of £20.4m compared with pretax profits of £9.2m at the comparable stage last year. This was despite a 5 per cent increase in worldwide premium to £323.4m.

Royal's shares fell by 6p to 540p as analysts contemplated the prospect of a downturn in Royal's profits for 1984, compared with 1983, and first-quarter figures due next week from other leading insurers, including the troubled Commercial Union Group.

The huge increase in weather claims was caused by extensive storm damage in the North of England and Scotland. At the same time Royal continued to suffer from problems in the United States, where there was a significant increase in commercial claims and insurance rates continued to be inadequate.

Mr John Howard, chief general manager, said that after a wide-ranging reappraisal of the US businesses Royal had decided to relocate its US headquarters from New York to the south in 1986. This will save 7 per cent of Royal's controllable expenses about \$24m in the US. Mr Howard said.

Royal also intends to close unprofitable agencies in the US

Ultramar price fall

The shares of Ultramar dropped by 38p to 609p yesterday despite a 24 per cent rise in first-quarter pretax profits to £59.3m on turnover up 85 per cent at £784.3m.

Ultramar has confirmed that 1983's total dividend will rise by 2p to 17p and that a one-for-one scrip issue will be made.

However, interest payments jumped from £4m to £17.5m and the company says that marketing and refining divisions in eastern Canada and California were still disappointing. Strong competition, particularly in eastern Canada, sometimes drove petrol prices well below the cost of crude oil.

STOCK EXCHANGES

FT-SE 100 Index: 1094.4 down 15.5
FT Index: 884.9 down 11.3
FT Gilt: 80.13 down 0.35
All Shares: 517.18 down 7.70
Baltic: 20.045
Dax: 116.91 down 1.63
New York: Dow Jones Average: (latest) 1167.61 up 2.09
Tokyo: Nikkei Dow Jones Index: 10,879.71 down 180.58
Hong Kong: Hang Seng Index: 921.31 down 18.40
Amsterdam: 178.5 down 1.0
Sydney: A.C. Index: 747.9 down 2.6
Frankfurt: Commerzbank Index: 1020.5 down 9.9
Brussels: General Index: 154.56 down 0.09
Paris: CAC Index: 178.9 down 2.0
Zurich: S&K General: 317.20 unchanged

CURRENCIES

LONDON CLOSE

Sterling \$1.3850 down ½ cent
Index 80.1 up 0.1
DM 3.8425 down 0.0025
FF 1.50 up 0.0150
Yen 317.50 down 0.75
Dollar Index 131.9 up 0.3
DM 2.7750 down 0.0122
NEW YORK LATEST
Sterling \$1.3725
Dollar Index 2.7826
INTERNATIONAL
ECU £0.583500
SDR £0.751534

INTEREST RATES

Domestic rates:
Bank base rates 9.9%
Finance houses base rate 9
Discount market loans week fixed 8.81
3 month interbank 9% - 9½
Euro-currency rates:
3 month dollar 11% - 11½
3 month DM 6½ - 6
3 month FF 12% - 12½
US rates:
Bank prime rate 12.50
Fed funds 11
Treasury long bond 90½ - 90¾
ECGD Fixed Rate Sterling Export Finance Scheme: IV Average - reference rate for interest period April 4 to May 1, 1983 inclusive: 8.934 per cent.

GOLD

London fixed (per ounce):
am \$370.10 pm \$371.75
Set \$373.50 - \$374 (£270-270.50)
New York (latest): \$373.25
Krunkraft (p.c.):
\$385-396.50 (£278.25-279.25)

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc

Interim Results

Extracts from the unaudited Profit and Loss Account	6 months to 31.3.84	6 months to 31.3.83	12 months to 30.9.83
Profit before taxation	£56.8m	£31.2m	£95.5m
Profit after taxation	£36.8m	£22.0m	£80.6m
Profit before extraordinary items attributable to ordinary shareholders	£36.4m	£21.6m	£95.1m
Earnings per 25p ordinary share			
before exceptional items	18.1p	9.8p	35.4p
after exceptional items	16.1p	9.6p	42.1p
Dividend per 25p ordinary share	3.3p	3.0p	7.4p

The profit and loss account for the twelve months ended 30 September 1983, included above is an abridged version of the company's full accounts for that period which have been filed with the registrar of companies and on which the auditors gave an unqualified report.

NOTES:
1. Taxation
The charge for taxation is based on a U.K. corporation tax rate of 47 per cent, and takes account of deferred taxation on all timing differences other than those considered likely to continue for the foreseeable future.
2. Extraordinary items
Net extraordinary items arising from events in the 6 months ended 31 March 1984 were £1.7m (credit 16 months ended 31 March 1983 - nil, 12 months ended 30 September 1983 - £1.8m charge).
The deferred taxation arising from proposed changes in rates of corporation tax and taxation allowances on capital expenditure required in a review of the 30 September 1983 provision will be dealt with in the full year's accounts for 1984 and is expected to be of the order of £90m. An additional provision in respect of tax variable losses will also be made.

Extract from Interim Statement by the Chairman, Sir Michael Herries

The unaudited profit before taxation for the six months ended 31 March 1984 amounted to £56.8 million, an increase of £25.6 million over the corresponding period last year.

During the six months ended 31 March 1984 the principal factors contributing to the increase were higher net interest earnings, improved commission and fee income and a reduction in the bad and doubtful debt charge, continuing the trend seen in the second half of last year. Whilst income has been rising, expenses have been contained and were only 4 per cent higher than for the same period last year.

The improved results have been achieved despite a fall in base rates from an average of 10.2 per cent for the first half of last year to 9 per cent for the first half of this year. The average margin between base rate and retail deposit rate widened from 3.2 per cent to 3.5 per cent over the comparable periods and this coupled with higher levels of sterling business accounted for most of the increase in net interest earnings.

These results reflect to an extent the improving general economic environment in the U.K., which remains patchy and the medium-term outlook is still uncertain. On balance, however, the general economic and financial outlook appears better than it did six months ago and we expect that as we progress towards the merger the underlying improvement in our domestic business will continue.

As a result of the rates of corporation tax and taxation allowances on capital expenditure proposed in the 1984 Finance Bill, taxation deferred by capital allowances mainly on leased assets must now be expected to become payable at the new rates instead of being deferred indefinitely. At the same time, the tax variation clauses in lease agreements will reduce future pre-tax rental income.

The impact of the changes on the deferred taxation already provided at 30 September 1983 will be reflected in the full year's accounts for 1984 by an extraordinary item charge, matched by a transfer from reserves. The additional deferred taxation provision expected to be required is of the order of £90 million. The calculations of the effect of tax variations on lease rentals are complex and a further provision in respect of this will be required.

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc Williams & Glyn's Bank plc

STOCK MARKET

Fears of US bank crisis hit index

Michael Clark

Fears that one of America's biggest banks, the Continental Illinois, was in difficulties sent a shudder through Wall Street last night and could have serious repercussions on the London stock market when dealings resume this morning.

Reports about the US bank had been circulating for several days. As a result share prices in New York lost an early firm start as the price of Continental Illinois slumped 5/4 to \$12 1/2 - a two-day fall of \$1 1/2. Street analysts now fear that Continental Illinois will be forced to cut its dividend in August resulting in renewed weakness in the shares.

A spokesman for the group last night confirmed that its federal funding desk was operating normally, but refused to comment on speculation that the group had applied for bankruptcy proceedings to be initiated. The reports started after two of the group's clients, the Charter Co and Public Services of New Hampshire, applied for receivers to be appointed.

The news was badly received in London and was mainly responsible for the FT index closing at its lowest for the day, 11.3 down at \$84.9, having seen prices attempt a rally after hours.

Dealers in London also remain fearful of another rise in domestic interest rates owing to the pound's continued weakness on the foreign exchanges, where at one stage it hit another low against the dollar.

This was reflected in gilts

where losses of up to £1/2 were reported in long. The only improvements were seen in the index-linked stocks which closed with gains of £1/2.

Dealings in Wordplex, the systems information service, made a good start despite the general depression elsewhere in the market. The 10 million shares were offered by way of tender at a minimum tender price of 240p and were offered by way of tender at a minimum

Tarmac's decision to form a joint roof tile venture with Amey Roadstone, part of Consolidated Gold Fields, could be bad news for Britain's market leaders, Redland and Marley. Analysts believe the new venture will add 10 per cent to existing market capacity and result in fewer margins. The new venture is led by Marley, which is 51 per cent owned by Tarmac, and Redland, which is 49 per cent owned by Tarmac.

tender price of 240p and were 1.9 times oversubscribed. Yesterday the shares opened at 313p compared with the striking price of 275p, but profit-taking produced a closing price of 306p. A premium of 31p in first time dealings.

Investment company, the Bishopsgate Trust, has received an approach from an unnamed suit which, the board says, could lead to an offer for the company being made. Earlier this week the Equitable Life Assurance Society announced it had increased its holding to 2.6 million shares, or 11 per cent of the total. Bishopsgate re-

sponded to the news with a rise of 29p to another new high of 190p.

Brokers Rowe & Pitman has successfully placed the rump of British Car Auction's recent £17m rights issue. The remaining 1.8 million shares, 10.9 per cent, were placed with institutions at 103.87p. Mr David Wickins, chairman of BCA, said he planned to use the money to help finance the group's US acquisition. Shares of BCA recovered an early fall to close unchanged at 107p.

Meanwhile, Mr David Wickins associate, Mr Michael Ashcroft, has increased his holding in Henlys, Coleman Milne, the luxury car conversion group, has bought an extra 700,000 shares taking its total holding to 3.5 million, or 24.98 per cent. Henlys was unmoved by the news at 121p.

Horizon Travel, the package tour group, slipped 4p to 171p after the Greater Manchester Transport Executive announced it had sold part of its holding amounting to 750,000 shares. This reduces the stake it shares with the Lancashire United Transport to 3.47 million shares.

Leading shares showed widespread falls, but the picture might have been worse were it not for a strong rally by Bowater, up at 309p, after 299p, on hopes that terms for the sale of its Newfoundland interests would be announced shortly.

Denials from the Government that it intended to immediately restrict tax benefits on personal pensions failed to

offer any relief to the life assurance companies. Among the losers Pearl slumped 13p to 734p.

On the bid front, Donald Macpherson rose 7p to 127p with the new bidder the Finnish chemicals group, Tikkurila Varitehtaat, wasting little time after announcing its terms before wading into the market place and picking up more

Microvitec, Britain's largest producer of computer terminals, has confirmed its intention of joining the USM with the offer of 7.5 million shares (26 per cent) at 180p, valuing the entire company at 180p. Offers for sale are a rare event on the USM these days, but should not prevent the shares opening at a premium in the first-time dealings. At this level the group, which supplies monitors to Sinclair and Acorn, is valued at £48.5m and has already stated it will apply for a full listing next year.

shares. On Wednesday it brought an extra 700,000 shares in Macpherson lifting its total holding to 1.6 million shares, or 8.8 per cent. The Finnish group has bid 125p a share topping Yule Catto's earlier bid of 110p a share. Dealers are now hoping that Yule Catto will increase its offer.

Plan Invest, the unit trust portfolio adviser, which joined the USM recently rose 3p to 75p after the Edinburgh Financial Trust announced it had in-

creased its holding to 9.09 per cent of the equity. Equity turnover on May 9, was £237,758m (18,208 bargains). The number of British and Irish stocks traded were 134.4 million. Gilt bargains totalled 3,659.

BORDER & SOUTHERN STOCKHOLDERS TRUST: Half-year to March 31, 1984. Pretax revenue £2,32m (£2.58m). Interest payment 1.3p (same). Full year's revenue may be reduced. But board expects to pay at least some dividends as last year, drawing if necessary on revenue reserves.

OCEANA DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT TRUST: Year to March 31, 1984. Gross revenue £73,000 (£50,000). Dividend 2p (1.82p).

MINTY: Year to Jan. 28, 1984. Turnover £3.49m (£3.42m). Pretax profit £19,600 (£21,210). Dividend 4p (same).

APPLEYARD GROUP: Appleyard has disposed of its interest in leasehold premises at North Street, Leeds, which have been unoccupied since Sept. 1981. The existing lease has been surrendered and Appleyard has paid £130,000 on the surrender. A two-year lease of property adjoining Appleyard's Roseville Road, Leeds, premises has been taken up at a rental of £40,000 a year. Appleyard will purchase this property, which is used by Appleyard of Leeds, for £440,000 by May 9, 1986.

TEMPUS

BOC sceptics fear the rainbow's end

The key factor in the BOC trading equation is tucked away in the interim statement - "not only have volumes on industrial gases increased in the US, but because of tightening supply and demand, prices have risen." The US capital spending recovery has arrived, and BOC should enjoy a geared participation.

The group is already talking about some fairly spectacular gains. Compared with the first half last year, oxygen and argon sales are ahead by 30 and 50 per cent respectively, a direct result, according to BOC, of the resurgence in the steel and metal fabrication industries in America. Excess capacity has been dropping out, discounts have been absorbed and prices rose in April by some 7 per cent.

On the regional basis, this improvement translates into more than doubled profits for BOC's American interests, while the divisional breakdown gives a more modest return in gas profits, from £56m to £63m.

As BOC stresses in its typically ebullient style, the capital upturn only started filtering through around the turn of the year. The whole of the second half should reflect what sounds like a gathering storm of demand, with prices rising. Add in the sharp recovery on the carbon graphite side, where nearly all the £7m upswing into profit took place in the second quarter, and it is hardly surprising that both company and analysts are looking for a record-breaking year.

Perhaps BOC may even reach the £160m of profits forecast at the top end of the brokers' range, a figure which becomes £200m-plus after adding back excess depreciation. At 292p, that puts the group on a prospective p/e of around 10.

BOC is certainly behaving as if that figure is a reasonable possibility. No capital raising moves are planned, the group is acquisition hungry, borrowings are not scheduled to rise substantially by the year-end, and annualized capital expenditure is running at some £240m. US gas capacity is to rise by a fifth shortly.

The additional logic behind the BOC optimism involves the global spread of activities.

Theoretically these should improve on the first half's average profits gain of a third, as the US resurgence ripples outwards.

Sadly, however, the stock market, paralleled by Dr Henry Kaufman's strictures on rates, is already acting as a classic discounting mechanism, perhaps signalling that it could be all over by 1985. On the charts the price relative is ambiguous but slipping. The shares may well be a cheeky sell.

Ward White

The emergence of Ward White as a leading force in footwear retailing and distribution has been both swift and successful. Four years more than 50 per cent of its operations were at the ailing manufacturing end of the industry. Last year only 9 per cent of trading profit came from manufacturing, with 57 per cent from retail and distribution.

The transformation has been achieved on the back of some very astute acquisitions, both at home and in the United States. It has 400 outlets in Britain and 193 in the US, including those of its latest investment, a 44.7 per cent stake in Winmar Enterprises, which promises to add another £1m to net after-tax profit in a full year.

Ward White is looking for a total of 1,000 outlets in the UK and could absorb 200 more with virtually no addition to central overheads. With £17m cash and a more respectable gearing level in the wake of the rights issue, it would be in a position to make an acquisition of up to £40m to help it reach this target.

The company has, however, a growing fascination with the US market and its ventures there have proved successful. Nearly 40 per cent of trading profit is now generated there. Ward White has invested over £33m in US retailing in the last four years and the company's top management is actively involved there in the running of the Winmar investment.

The share price, up 1p at 132p, remains remarkably low and the company is wide open

to a takeover bid as it represents such good value.

Debenhams

Debenhams went out of its way yesterday to stress that, contrary to City speculation, it had no intention of hiving off its Webbeck Finance credit subsidiary. The reasons are twofold - the first, spoken, the second merely implicit. Last year Webbeck made 40 per cent of Debenhams profits with a more than doubled contribution of £17m, against £2m. This growth is expected to continue and Debenhams sees Webbeck as a cornerstone of the mainstream business. Debenhams wants to benefit from the expected spectacular growth over the next few years rather than let outsiders in.

The second implicit reason is defensive. Debenhams is much stronger than it was and the chances of a bid from Mr Gerald Ronson or anyone else have receded. But should the bid come, Webbeck could play an important role in keeping shareholders loyal.

Webbeck's performance has also weakened the big upturn in trading profits from the department stores themselves. Debenhams believes it has found the formula which will allow the department store to survive in the 21st century and no doubt Professor Roland Smith at House of Fraser will be pondering yesterday's figures. The growth in profits is genuine, with property profits substantially down on last year.

The stores have benefited greatly from increased credit sales by offering special deals to credit customers. About 27 per cent of Debenhams sales are on credit but the long-term aim is to get that figure up to more than 50 per cent, like Sears Roebuck in the US. Such high levels of credit sales give Debenhams greater control over its customers and will steer them towards the financial and property services to start on a trial basis in a few stores over the next few months.

The actual tax ratio is 102p and the yield is more than 5 per cent with the shares down 3p at 177p. Given the confidence of the chairman, Mr Bob Thornton, about profits growth, this does not look expensive.

MONEY MARKETS

The Bank of England at least cleared away one uncertainty yesterday when it jacked up its intervention rates by one-half percentage point after Wednesday's base rate rises, moving into line with NatWest and Lloyds.

Some band 4 bills were taken at a rate 1/2 per cent above the previous dealing level, reflecting bearish mood of the market.

The authorities first forecast a £150m shortage but raised it to around £250m at midday. The Bank showed its hand at noon with purchases of £212m of band 4 bills further £54m, of band 4 bills further £54m, at 8 per cent, making the total assistance £266m.

This over provision helped to bring rates crashing off by up to about 1 per cent at the close.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

Rising US interest rates and a poor response to a government bond auction overnight in New York yesterday brought a sharp early advance in the dollar. But the currency lost much of its gains by the close as nervous profit-taking developed on reports that a leading bank was in "difficulties".

Intervention by European central banks also brought the dollar back.

Sterling fell to a record low of 1.3750 before closing 1/2 cent off at 1.3850 against the dollar, though its international value finished 0.1 better at 80.1 after 79.9 initially. It ended little changed at 3.8425 (3.8450) against the Deutschmark after 3.8513 at one stage.

Bunzl sells US holding

By Andrew Cornelius

companies were engaged in cigarette filter manufacture.

AFC is now a broadly based filtration and plastics company which will benefit from buying out the "foreign" Bunzl stake.

The corporation was established to manufacture cigarette filters for the US market.

AFC agreed to place its 10 per cent holding in Bunzl in the London stock market at 517p a share. Both agreements must be approved by Bunzl shareholders.

Mr Ernest Beaumont, the Bunzl chairman, said that the cross-holding between the two companies no longer makes any strategic or commercial sense.

He said that the agreement went back to a time when both

Base Lending Rates

ABN Bank	9 1/2%
Barclays	9 1/2%
BCCI	9 1/2%
Citibank	9 1/2%
Consolidated Crds	9 1/2%
Continental Trust	9 1/2%
C. Hoare & Co	9 1/2%
Lloyds Bank	9 1/2%
Midland Bank	9 1/2%
Nat Westminster	9 1/2%
TSB	9 1/2%
Williams & Glyn's	9 1/2%
Citibank NA	9 1/2%

† Mortgage Base Rate.

• 7 day deposits rates at under £10,000, 4%, £10,000 up to £50,000, 4 1/2%, £50,000 and over, 5%.

Company	Share Price	Dividend	Yield	Company	Share Price	Dividend	Yield	Company	Share Price	Dividend	Yield	Company	Share Price	Dividend	Yield
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Schroder Wagg names division head

J Henry Schroder Wagg & Co: Mr Peter Sedgwick has been appointed head of the investment division with effect from July 2. He succeeded Mr Gordon Popham who, earlier this year, was appointed group managing director of investment management and personal financial services worldwide for the Schroder Group. Mr Bernard Crowder has been appointed a director with effect from July 16. He will be managing director of the Singapore International Merchant Bankers, an associated company

APPOINTMENTS

of the Schroder Group and he will be based in Singapore. Seagram UK: Mr Brendan Carr has become director of finance and administration. He will continue as company secretary. Wendy Restaurants (UK): Mr Jack St Clair has been appointed managing director. He succeeds Mr David Mitchell, who leaves to join Berni Inns. Barclays Bank: Mr John Quinton and Mr Andrew Buxton are to become vice-

chairmen, after the proposed merger of Barclays Bank and Barclays Bank International on January 1, 1985. Mr Peter Leslie becomes chief general manager and three senior general managers are named: Mr Peter Ardron (International), Mr Robert Sale (UK), and Mr Humphrey Norrington (Finance). There are two new general manager appointments: Mr Trevor Nicholas (Resources) and Mr Ted Foster (Corporate). All other members of senior management retain their present functions.

Big rise in whisky output expected

By Jeremy Warner

Scotland's whisky distilleries are beginning to gear up for a big jump in production after more than four years of drastic cuts. A number of distilleries, some of which have been operating at as little as 10 per cent of capacity, are to increase production by as much as a fifth this year and will prepare for a surge in demand next year as well.

The industry is optimistic that the heavy destocking, which has been a feature of the recession, has at last come to an end, and that even if there is no re-stocking, Scotch whisky blenders will at last start to replenish what they are using now.

A sustained improvement in demand from the blenders will benefit many small isolated Highland and island communities where the distilleries are often an important source of employment.

At the Highland Park Distillery, at Kirkwall, on Orkney, Mr Jim Lochhead, the manager, reckons it will soon be necessary to take on extra staff.

"We are planning to lift production of Highland Park by about 20 per cent this year to take the distillery up to 35 per cent capacity utilization," he says. At its peak, the distillery employed 48 people but this has been reduced to 32.

"The signs are that we will see a more significant jump still in production during 1985 and we could well find ourselves short of staff" says Mr Lochhead.

Most distilleries will again operate an extended silent season of four months this year, but among the top main distilleries the products of which are widely used in the leading blends, there is a noticeable change in mood.

BSG International in £10m cash call

By William Kay, City Editor

Less than a month after announcing yearly results, the motor distributor BSG International has returned to the stock market to ask shareholders for £10.1m through a one-for-one rights issue at 17p a share compared with 21p for the existing shares ahead of the deal.

As the 1983 figures produced

a dramatic turnaround from a £1.3m loss to a £3.3m profit, that would have been the obvious time to cash in on shareholders' goodwill.

As it is, the chairman, Mr Asley Whittall, contents himself with saying that "the directors are encouraged by the current level of trading. The management accounts for the

first quarter of 1984 show an improvement on the comparable period of 1983. The board therefore looks to the future with considerable confidence." The new shares will not rank for the final dividend for 1983. But last year's 1p-a-share payment should be repeated on the share capital as doubled by the rights issue.

ROBECO and ROLINCO

SHARE SPLIT

At the Annual General Meeting of Robeco NV and the Extraordinary Meeting for shareholders of Rolinco NV, both held on 29th March 1984, proposals to amend the Articles of Association of the two Companies were approved by the shareholders and pursuant to these amendments, effective 1st May 1984, the par value of the Ordinary Shares in each Company has been changed from Fls.50 to Fls.10 resulting in a five-for-one stock split.

The Sub-shares have also been subject to a 5:1 split, following which each Sub-share now represents one tenth of a fully paid Ordinary Share of Fls.10.

Holders of Warrants to Bearer (cum Cps No 83 to 128 only in the case of Robeco and Cps No 26 to 34 only in the case of Rolinco) and/or Sub-share Certificates registered in the name of National Provincial Bank (Nominees) Limited and other names, should present these, accompanied by the special lodgement form(s) to:-

National Westminster Bank PLC,
Stock Office Services,
2nd Floor (Counter),
20 Old Broad Street,
LONDON EC2

(on business days, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.) for OVERSTAMPING to show that the warrants/certificates in current issue now represent five times the number of shares or Sub-shares indicated therein.

Separate lodgement forms exist for the Bearer shares and Sub-shares and are obtainable from the above address.

ROBECO

The balanced income/growth trust

ROLINCO

The growth trust of the Robeco Group

The Royal Bank of Scotland Base Rate

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc announces that with effect from close of business on 10 May 1984 its Base Rate for lending is being increased from 8½ per cent per annum to 9¼ per cent per annum.

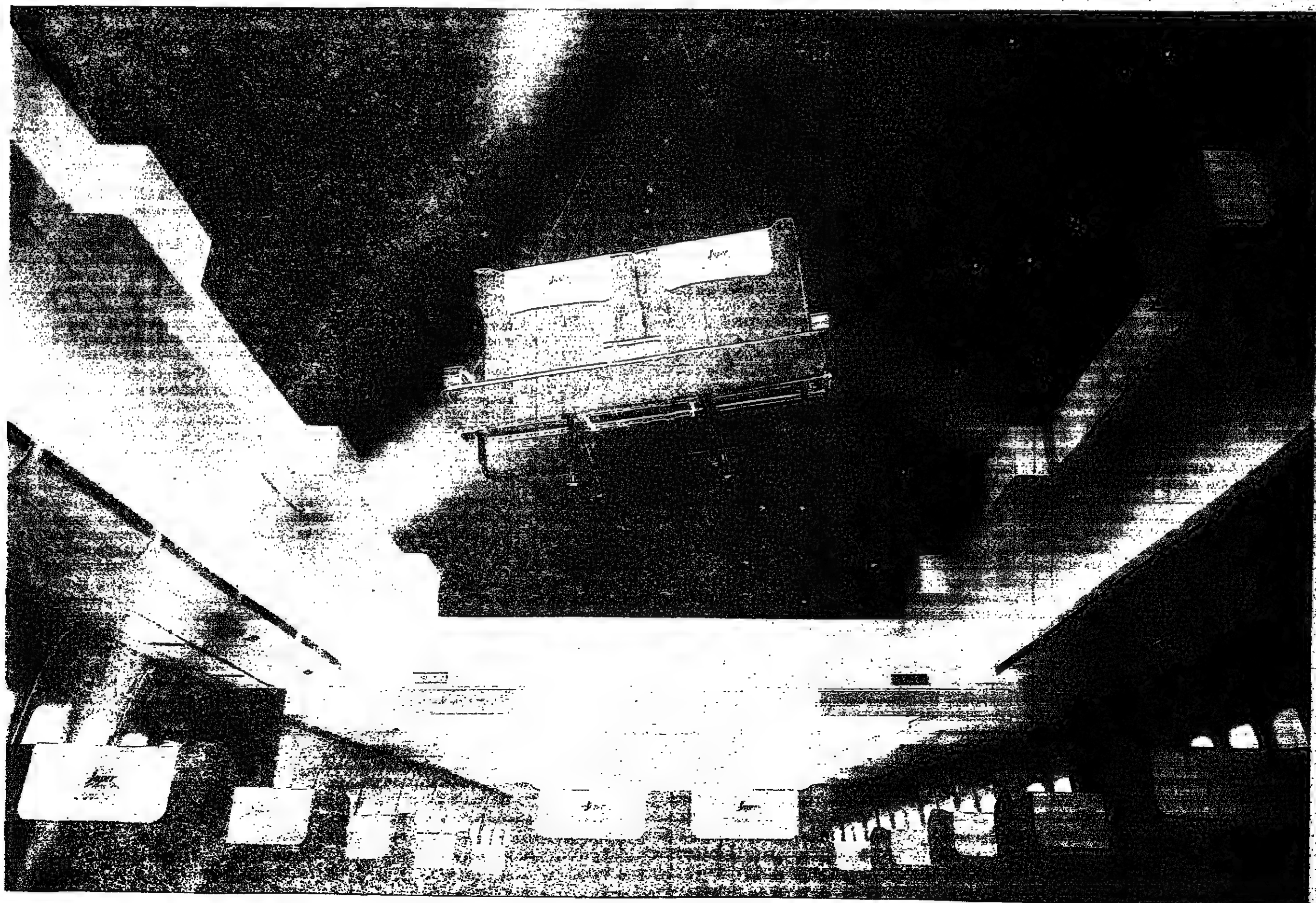
BANK OF SCOTLAND

Base Rate

The Bank of Scotland intimates that, with effect from 10th May, 1984, and until further notice, its Base Rate will be increased from 8½ PER ANNUM to 9¼ PER ANNUM.

LONDON, BIRMINGHAM, BRISTOL, MANCHESTER, NEWCASTLE & SOUTHAMPTON OFFICES - DEPOSITS

The rate of interest on sums lodged for a minimum period of seven days or subject to seven days' notice of withdrawal will be 5¼ PER ANNUM, also with effect from 10th May 1984.



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are just as many of them as before, which means they can now give you more personal care and attention than ever.

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هكذا مزّم الأهل

UDLEY
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Kuwait appeals for cooperation on oil

By David Miller
The success of Britain's America's Cup challenge in 1987 under the Royal Thames flag will depend considerably on the ability of West Nally, the public relations company, to raise sponsorship worth a minimum £4.5m over the next six months. The firm is optimistic of being able to find £6m, the kind of sum which Peter de Savary, for instance, was not prepared to invest a second time out of his own resources.

The Royal Thames have decided to give their backing to a syndicate formed under the name of Admiral Sir Ian Easton, former Commandant of the Royal College of Defence Studies, as opposed to the alternative syndicate which was being marshalled by Kit Hobday, vice-chairman of the Victory '83 syndicate last year. It seems that Royal Thames did not wish for a high-profile campaign such as that which might have been conducted, though his substantial experience over two America's Cup campaigns may yet be taken on board by the preferred syndicate. Royal Burnham YC and the Royal Yacht Squadron had declined any interest before Royal Thames submitted the British entry.

Hobday did not have exclusivity on de Savary's offer to donate £400,000-worth of equipment, including his first 12 metre, the Dubois-designed Victory '82, which will be available to the Easton group. De Savary is keen to provide performance throughout the year.

This year, however, UEI has seen improved trading and Yewlands is running at a small profit which the company hopes to maintain.

There were also signs of improvement at Cosworth, which has expanded its engineering division to cope with several design contracts for major motor manufacturers. It has also won a major four-year contract with Mercedes-Benz.

UEI sees profits falter

By Ian Griffiths
UEI, the electronic and engineering company, saw pre-tax profits for the year to January slip back from £9.4m to £8.2m, mainly because the Cosworth Group, which makes racing car engines and components, failed to produce an expected upturn before the year-end.

There was also a marked reduction in aerospace orders for the Yewlands Group towards the end of 1983, reflecting a generally sluggish

Hill Samuel Base Rate

With effect from the close of business on May 11, 1984, Hill Samuel's Base Rate for lending will be increased from 8½ per cent to 9½ per cent per annum.

Interest payable on the Bank's Demand Deposit Account will be at the rate of 5½ per cent per annum.

Hill Samuel & Co. Limited
100 Wood Street, London EC2P 2AL
Telephone: 01-628 8011.

NATIONAL Girobank

National Girobank announces that with effect from 10th May 1984.

Base Rate

Its base rate was raised from 8½% to 9%

Deposit Accounts

The rate of interest payable on deposit accounts will be 6% per annum

10 Milk Street LONDON EC2V 8JH



Allied Irish Banks Limited

announce that with effect from close of business on 11th May 1984 its Base Rate is increased from 8½% to 9½% p.a.

Head Office - Britain: 64-66 Coleman Street London EC2R 5AL

AMERICA'S CUP: ROYAL THAMES AIM AT HIGH BUDGET AND LOW PROFILE

Easton's £6m challenge



Admiral Sir Ian Easton: challenger

The knowledge gained from his three-year project, but wishes to be a contributor, not a platform. One possible sponsor expected to come forward is British Aerospace, and a commercial airline, offering reduced travel costs to Australia, will be vital to the budget.

Further imminent meetings of the Royal Thames will decide two important administrative functions: the chairman of the America's Cup committee and the syndicate's full-time sailing manager. The key to the 1984-87 campaign will be team work at all levels.

One of the short comings of the Victory syndicate, in spite of de Savary's prodigious investment in the money and enthusiasm and apart from his controversial postponement of a decision on the after-guard, was a lack of day-to-day direction in Newport or Nassau whenever de Savary himself

was absent. Neither Jim Alabaster nor Charles Spedding had sufficient independent authority at the dock. Additionally, winter training knowledge of both computers and the crews were not adequately synchronized and there were differences between the Victory '83 designer, Ian Goss, and the crew, on the most advantageous tuning of the boat. Huge economies can be made, on the Victory experience, in rigging and sail purchase.

All these lessons can now be fed into the Royal Thames challenge. Possible chairmen of the committee are Graham Walker, a retired Jersey businessman who was captain of last year's Admiral's Cup team, Robin Aisher and Christopher Dunning. An able but potentially provocative sailing manager would be Harry Cudmore, the joint Victory helmsman with de Savary, was sacked in early 1983.

The technical independence of the designer may have to be modified by a role as consultant. It is thought that Howlett, who was under contract to de Savary, may wish to collaborate while Roger Marshall, a British designer in the United States, could also be incorporated. Americans and Australians have huge hull design developments under way, and the British cannot afford to be becalmed at the starting line. The Royal Thames will reassess their position within the year: they would rather cut their losses early than limp through

to take a lowly place among the 23 entries.

It seems sure that sail designer Angus Melrose, whose skill was enlisted possibly too late to help Victory, will be involved, especially as he has been working in the loft of the Australia II syndicate most of the winter. Chris Law is the most obvious likely helmsman, while the mature Kelvin Rawlings and the Thompson twins, helms masters of the wind, would be the preferred nucleus of the front eight.

The task in Perth will be more demanding than in Rhode Island, not simply in cost and distance, but in the size of the challenging fleet and accumulated foreign knowledge. John Kollins, the lightweight skipper with the Robert Redford smile, who in Courageous gave Dennis Conner's Liberty such a close run in the 1983 defender's trials, will lead the New York YC challenge.

The NYCY have already purchased their own foreshore dock site at Fremantle, as has Conner's San Diego club. The government of Western Australia is developing a new marina with modern workshop facilities for the expected fleet. What has yet to be decided is which club will be the challenger of record, overseeing the race conditions and foreign elimination series - Royal Thames are thought to be reluctant - and whether the multiple US entry must be reduced under the rules to one challenger before the elimination series. I guess the event should sell a few cans of lager.

FOOTBALL: LONDON CLUBS PREPARE FOR EMOTIONAL EVENINGS

Bonds joins Brooking in farewell

By Clive White

The end of another season, the end of another career. West Ham United's retirement party on the Upton Park pitch next Monday against Everton will now honour not just Trevor Brooking but also Billy Bonds. But, like old soldiers, Bonds is only fading away.

After celebrating his 50th league game against Arsenal last Monday, he has announced his intention to step down from regular first-team football with two years of his contract left, to concentrate instead on coaching. He will, however, remain a squad member. He said he found at the age of 37 that his enthusiasm, possibly his greatest asset, and concentration were waning.

Bonds, always a fighter, saw himself in the front line leading the troops on the beaches. "He was the sort to stiffen the resolve of colleagues and supporters. He was a winner. Yet he never won an England cap, which was surprising considering the West Ham influence on England teams."

His character was in stark contrast to the soft image West Ham presented, and if they regularly flattered to deceive during his 17 years there in the league, they were a stylish and potent force in cup competition, where in victory or defeat.

Luton Town will also be saying farewell to two old campaigners shortly, the captain, Brian Horton and Raddy Antic. The Yugoslav is retiring to his homeland at the age of 33, but Horton, at 35, believes he still has a couple of seasons left in him. By comparison the career of another Luton player, Paul Walsh, is just beginning, possibly with Manchester United, who completed the sale of Ray Wilkins to AC Milan yesterday.

Wilkins agreed after eight hours of negotiations to accept a £75,000 signing-on fee and a three-year contract worth nearly £600,000 - all for "my family's sake". The proceeds of the sale, after the purchase of Strachan, leaves Ron Addison, the manager, with a handy sum of £300,000 which he put it to "test the market". He is put it, like a cautious broker. The sum fits neatly the size of Walsh's valuation.

Adios, Barcelona, Menotti says

Barcelona (Reuters) - Cesar Luis Menotti, the manager of Barcelona, has confirmed that he will leave the club 30. He said that "nothing" could make him change his mind.

Questioned about a reported offer to manage Flamengo, the Brazilian club, he said: "Now I want to rest, but in three months everything could change."

Menotti, who led Argentina to win the 1978 World Cup final, has failed to lead Barcelona to triumph since he replaced Udo Lattek, the West German manager, last year. Barcelona finished third in the league and lost the cup final 1-0 against Athletic Bilbao, the league champions, last Saturday.

Maidstone's strong case for election

By Paul Newman

Above all, while Maidstone's League club in addition to Gillingham and that they would average between 2,500 and 3,000 in the fourth division, which by current standards is reasonably healthy.

Their attendance on Saturday - 2,502 people saw them win the Alliance championship by beating Telford United 6-0 - was better than eight in the League. Hartlepool's home game against Stockport County on the same day was watched by a crowd of 794, the lowest in the League for 1984.

Maidstone, moreover, would not need a big improvement in gates to pay for fourth division football, as their players would remain part-time. Bill Williams, the manager, a former centre-half who ended a lengthy League career at Gillingham, believes he already has the nucleus of a good fourth division side.

The strength of Maidstone's case and the weakness of Hartlepool's look certain to ensure a close contest at next month's election. The fact that both are going to the polls for the second year in succession could just swing the vote Maidstone's way.

Tottenham's latest chapter of sense and insensibility

By Stuart Jones
Football Correspondent



Ardiles: could play

The first leg of the UEFA Cup final covered the ground that lies between triumph and tragedy. The glory belonged to the players, who held mighty Anderlecht to a 1-1 draw on Wednesday night. All they must do to collect the trophy in 12 days is to act sensibly at home. The shame belonged to some of their supporters. Although the trouble inside the stadium was kept to a minimum, it seems far too optimistic to expect these English travellers to behave sensibly abroad.

Police sirens, crying almost continually for two days in the Belgian capital, served as a nauseatingly familiar reminder of how deeply the nation's reputation continues to be soiled by criminals, invariably drunk and disguised as hooligans. No wonder foreign hosts are in fear of them and no wonder the authorities are in despair about them.

Once the hour before such a game tinged with apprehension. Now it crackles with animosity. The pavement outside bars on the outskirts of Brussels were lined with English youths, soaked by the rain and draped in flags. Groups of beer with one fist, they punched the air with the other. Passer-by were taunted by an ugly stream of obscene chants. After they entered the grounds, where they were confined behind fences and watched carefully by the police. They turned mercifully into genuine supporters. Heavily outnumbered by their Belgian counterparts, they shouted their approval throughout the evening. Douglas Alexiou, Tottenham's chairman, later showed his appreciation by walking to their end of the pitch to return their applause.

But, as in this country, the sickening problem has been stifled in the media only to be spread across the surrounding environment. It is there, often outside and beyond even the most comprehensive preparations of the local police, that buildings and humans alike become

Cox offered new terms by Newcastle board

Newcastle United have offered their manager, Arthur Cox, a new contract. The Newcastle directors met within 24 hours of United clinching promotion at Huddersfield on Monday, and Cox has been informed of the terms and length of contract, although he has yet to sign it.

The Newcastle captain Kevin Keegan, may miss what is scheduled to be his 500th Football League appearance. He is doubtful for tomorrow's home game with Brighton and Hove Albion, a match which will mark his retirement from competitive football, because of the head injury he sustained scoring Newcastle's first goal against Derby County last Saturday.

Keegan rates his chances as 50-50, although he travelled up from his Hampshire home to Newcastle yesterday.

A Bristol City board to hand out their own punishment to supporters involved in the crowd troubles during their fourth division match at Reading on April 7.

The FA commission will hold an inquiry into the riot at Elm Park today, but City have already reached their own conclusions. They plan to ask for a list of supporters found guilty of committing offences in Reading on the day of the match. City will then take out a court injunction banning the troublemakers from future matches involving the club.

Sponsors aim to encourage Alliance goals

The Alliance Premier League yesterday announced the biggest sponsorship in the history of semi-professional football (Paul Newman writes). Gola, the British sportswear company, are to put £250,000 into the league over the next three years.

The sponsorship is intended to encourage attacking football. A fund of £250,000 will be distributed each month among the club scoring the most goals and all those scoring three goals in away games and four goals in home games. Money will also be made available to encourage youth football.

Gola, said: "The real strength of football is not at the level of the Liverpool and Manchester United. It is at this mid-level of football and among youngsters, and we are delighted to be involved in it."

Paul Bence, the coach of Wokingham Town, is to succeed Mike Keen as manager of another football club, Wycombe Wanderers.

TENNIS



Kitty Godfree winning the 1926 title

Wimbledons women on centenary parade

By Rex Bellamy, Tennis Correspondent

Wimbledon is always a special occasion. This year it will be a very special occasion, especially for those to whom youth is a memory. The first women's singles championship was played in 1884 and 17 of the surviving champions have accepted invitations, expenses paid, to be the tournament's centenary guests.

The three champions missing will be the two Helens, Wills (later Moody and Roark) and Jacobs, and possibly Karen Hantze (later Sussman), who may yet find it possible to come. The oldest former champion to attend will be Kitty Godfree, formerly Miss McKane, who is now aged 83, still plays tennis, but is rumoured to be slowing down.

The centenary heroines are expected to compete in one event or another: Billie Jean King, Evonne Cawley, Virginia Wade, Chris Lloyd, and Martina Navratilova. The rest will join them in a Centre Court parade on July 2, the second Monday, and all will be presented with inscribed Waterford crystal. As an appropriate change, this year's musical accompaniment will be provided by the Women's Royal Army Corps.

Two films are being made, one primarily for distribution overseas, to commemorate 100 years of the women's championships. Two respected historians have produced a booklet about the 34 women who have won the title. The Bayswater-born Mrs Godfree is to be honoured with a statue to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the first of her two singles championships.

Another statue in evidence this year will feature Fred Perry, who is also to have the Somerset Road gates renamed to commemorate his achievements. It is 50 years since Perry won his first Wimbledon singles championship. Until Bjorn Borg came along, Perry was the only man to win the men's title three times in a row after playing through the tournament.

Since Perry's successes the only British player to reach the final has been Bunny Austin (1938) and only Mike Sangster and Roger Taylor have advanced to the semi-finals. In taking pride in the Perry of 50 years ago, Britain may also feel some embarrassment at the failure of its male compatriots to reach similar heights.

It may therefore be a coincidental veil of kindness that, to some extent, the Perry of 1984 will be upstaged by Mrs Godfree. Alice Marble, Pauline Betz, Margaret Osborne, Louise Brough, Doris Hart, Shirley Fry, Althea Gibson, Maria Bueno, Angela Mortimer, Margaret Court, Ann Jones and the five former women's champions who remain on active (if in some cases part-time) service.

RUGBY UNION

Travellers with a tradition

By David Hands
Rugby Correspondent

England's under-23 side leave for a three-match tour of Spain today, following the pattern recently established by the parties which visited Italy (1982) and Romania (1983). Of the six matches played on those two tours, five were won, the only defeat coming against the senior Italian side at the end of the 1982 tour.

Spain should not prove so testing, though the playing conditions may prove novel to the English. Wales found this to be so when their B party visited Spain last year but had no trouble winning all their games. The closing match against the senior Spanish side by 65-16, although the Spanish three-quarters indicated some of the pace and flair one expects to find in their neighbours in France.

The only doubt about the tour surrounds the timing, since so many of the eligible players are students and engaged in examinations just now.

The Aston Villa captain, Allan Evans, is to have an exploratory operation on the knee which has troubled him for much of the season.

The Villa Manager, Tony Barton, has had talks with the chairman, Doug Ellis, about reducing expenditure. Mr Ellis has again called for a £150,000 wage cut. Barton says it is inevitable players will leave "but it will not be done to the detriment of my first team plans."

ENGLAND UNDER-23 TOUR PARTY: S. Hooper (Nottingham), S. Hogg (Bristol), E. Evans (Leicester), G. Halsey (Stratford), J. Goss (Bristol), R. Jones (Bristol), L. Llewellyn (Warrington), K. Simms (Cambridge University), R. Grant (Cardiff), R. Moon (Leeds), A. Woodhouse (Hartlepool), P. Esterhuysen (Gloucester), S. Hadden (Leicester), G. Smith (Leicester), J. Ward (Nottingham), S. Moore (Nottingham), C. Treasurer (Leicester), R. Morris (Oxford), J. Morrison (Oxford), R. Pridmore (Gloucester), P. Jackson (Leeds), J. Wiles (Leicester), D. Pugh (Warrington), M. Wyatt (Derby).

FINANCIAL: May 12, Basque XV (Spain) beat XV (Barceloneta) 20-0 (Spain (Gow)).

RUGBY LEAGUE

Division is regionalized

By Keith Macklin

The second division of the League will be split into eastern and western sections next season, following a fixtures meeting in Leeds.

There has been strong support for some change in the divisions system following yet another season in which first division attendances held up, while second division gates showed a disturbing decline, particularly among the less successful clubs.

The admission of Sheffield and Mansfield into the second division next season gives a lower division of 20 clubs. This would have meant a total of 38 fixtures home and away for clubs.

Next season the first division will remain at 16 clubs, but the second division will be regionalized. There will be an eastern zone of 10 clubs, mostly in Yorkshire and the Pennines, and a western zone composed mainly of clubs in Lancashire, Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Cumbria.

Other home and away playing fixtures. The top five in each zone will play each other home and away, and the bottom five likewise, giving a total of 28 fixtures in all.

The end of the season promotion and relegation will remain the same, four up and four down, with the top four clubs in the second division, regardless of original zoning, going up.

A new three-year contract worth £240,000 was agreed yesterday between the Rugby League and John Player Special, sponsors of the trophy competition. The event, launched in 1972, will carry prize money of £75,000 next season - and increase of 25 per cent.

RACING: CAUTION FREE TO RIDE CLAUDE MONET IN THE DERBY

Teenoso maintains family tradition

By Michael Seely

Teenoso became the first Derby winner to run at Chester after his Epsom triumph. He was ridden by the 17-year-old jockey, David Mearns, who rode him to victory in the 1970 when capturing the Ormonde Stakes. This was the third consecutive family triumph in this historic race, Geoffrey Wragg's father, Harry Wragg, having won the trophy with Pelford and Six Mile Bottom in 1931 and 1932. The meeting was abandoned last year.

Recording his first victory since Epsom, Teenoso accomplished his task with a minimum of fuss. Regal Steel took over from the pacemaker, Nili Plantation, at halfway. Questioning to lead approaching the straight, Teenoso beat Khaibar by one and a half lengths. Trakady, the heavily-backed second favourite, stayed on to take third place, a further three lengths away.

Pat Edmond was full of praise for the winner. "He has got to be a good horse. He is so brave and genuine. But he wasn't doing a tap in front. He has got very lazy. I noticed it when I rode him in a gallop at Newmarket last week."

Wragg deserves every accolade for his handling of Teenoso. The colt only ran twice after his Epsom triumph, having finished third in the Stewards' Cup and fourth in the Derby and having occupied the same position behind Seymour Hicks in the Great Voltigeur Stakes at York. "He had a problem after York and the vets never really got it. He was just desperately sore on his off shin. He had Magneto Pulse treatment and rest and was all right after six weeks."

Teenoso is now on target for the rest of his fighting programme this season. "He will run in the Hurdle Stakes at Royal Ascot if the ground is not too firm. After that he will go for the Grand Prix de Saint-Cloud, the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes and the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe," the trainer continued.

Eric Moller, Teenoso's owner-breeder, had made a special journey from Hongkong to watch his hero's victory. "We are so pleased to see him on the course. You can't miss them."

No further clues about this year's Derby, however, were provided by

Steve Caution in his line for the Derby ride on Henry Cecil's Claude Monet. His retaining trainer, Barry Hills said at Chester: "It doesn't look as though I will have a runner in the Derby, so I've told Steve he is free to ride what he wants."

Caution rode Claude Monet to a narrow victory in the Heathcote Stakes at Newmarket, and will ride the colt next Wednesday's Mecca Danes Stakes at York.

Guy Harwood said that Ministerial would next go for the Predominate Stakes and Barry Hills also announced the Irish Sweepstakes as a likely objective for Seismic Wave. "He'll have to show some spark there or he certainly won't go for the Derby," said the Lambourn trainer.

Followers of the Malton trainer Pat Rohan had their first strike of the meeting when Mark Birch rode a narrow victory over Marching Moor in the Sceptre Hurdle Stakes.

A competitive race for the Ladbrokes Hurdle Handicap was won by John Lowe on Electrifying, who made every yard of the running. "That's my first ever visit to Chester," said Peter Calver, the winning trainer. "Judged by the way that Electrifying handled the track, we certainly came here to win."

After the start of the Oulton Handicap had been delayed for 10 minutes while Golden Fleeter, who had been pulled up late in the race, was taken to the vet, Philip Robinson rode All Is Forgiven for a short head win over Bernard Sunley.

Rowa fancied to strengthen Stoute's hand

By Maudslayi

Supporters of Sandy Island, Henry Cecil's Oaks candidate, will be looking for a commitment from Rowa in this afternoon's Esal Bookmakers Oaks Trial Stakes at Lingfield Park. Sandy Island had Rowa three and a half lengths back in third place after an authoritative victory in last Friday's Pretty Polly Stakes over 10 furlongs at Newmarket.

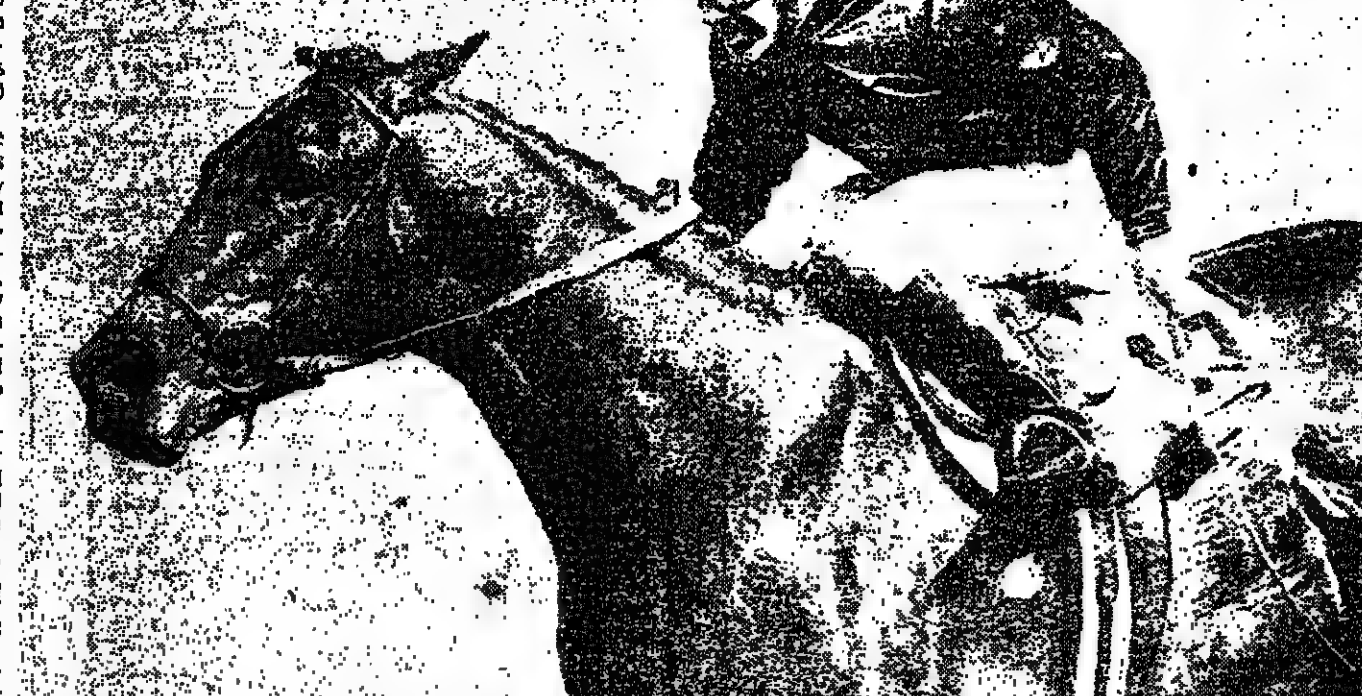
Rowa made most of the running in that event but was quickly swallowed up by Sandy Island, once Lester Pigott set alight Lord Howard de Walden's promising filly two furlongs from home. However, Rowa stuck to her task gamely and looked certain to finish second until Dick Hern's one-eyed Cassandra made up a lot of ground in the closing stages to take the minor honours.

It is likely that Walter Swinburn will hold up Rowa for a late challenge this time, and with another of Michael Stoute's fillies, Malaak, winning Wednesday's Cheshire Oaks so impressively the Newmarket trainer could have a strong hand in the premier fillies classic, which he won in 1978 with Fair Saline.

Hern gave notice at Chester that his stable are finding their form after a slow start to the season and his Secret Way, who won at York on her first appearance as a two-year-old, must be respected. Guy Harwood's well-bred Spinelle will appreciate the chance to bring his filly into play over this extended trip.

Incidentally, it was bad luck on Jim Bolger, the Irish trainer, that he was unable to run Rustic Lace in the trial after she had badly cut herself when cast in her box yesterday morning.

However, Spinelle fares, Harwood should be on the mark in the opening Tender King Maiden Stakes with



Double chance: Serheed, fancied to follow up his recent Kempton victory in today's Tender Heart Stakes at Lingfield

Overturn, who has been pleasing on the Pulborough gallops. Harwood's only two-year-old runners so far this term, Old Baily and Solo Native, have both scored impressively.

Paul Cole's horses have been running exceptionally well recently and Miami Prince (2.45) and Serheed (3.45), both winners last time, should add to the Lambourn trainer's tally.

Miami Prince, who gamely held Saturnian's challenge in a

competitive sprint handicap at Newmarket last week, is expected to defy an 8lb-penalty in the Warners Holidays Handicap despite the presence of Native Hero, who, before disappointing at Epsom, had beaten the Chester winner Clansime in a driving finish at Newbury. Serheed showed his well-being with a four-length victory at Kempton Park last Saturday. Penalized only 4lb for that success, this course and distance winner looks the best bet of the day.

Another trainer in top form is the Newmarket-based Patrick Haslam, who has high hopes of a double at Hamilton Park with Foreigner (4.0) and Wang Feihong (5.30). Watch out, too, for another Newmarket raider, The trained by Michael Jarvis and taking a drop in class to run in the Levy Board Maiden Apprentice Stakes.

Apprentice banned Gary McGaskill, an apprentice jockey attached to Neville

Chamberlain's stable, was banned from racing for six months by the jockey club yesterday. The disciplinary committee heard that McGaskill had been convicted of theft from the stable lad's host at Ayr racecourse. Any criminal offence constitutes a breach of the rules of racing. The committee imposed the sentence by allowing McGaskill to continue to work in the stable.

Charlie Nelson, the Lambourn trainer, reports that the temperature of his beaten 1,000 Guineas favourite Mahogany has now been normal for two days. "But in condition, she looks as though she's been round Aintree," said Nelson.

Hamilton Park

GOING: firm
Draw: middle to high numbers best

2.30 LEVY BOARD MAIDEN APPRENTICE STAKES (2-y-o; 5.30; 1m 40yd) (7 runners)

1-3-4 AUCULPARIAN P. Heston 8-7
2-5-6 BABY BOY (B) M. Penson 8-7
3-4-5 KHAMATURIAN M. Penson 8-7
1-2-3-4 KHAMATURIAN M. Penson 8-7
1-2-3-4 KHAMATURIAN M. Penson 8-7
1-2-3-4 KHAMATURIAN M. Penson 8-7

Hamilton selections
By Maudslayi
2.30 Tha. 3.0 Easy Star. 3.30 Your Choice. 4.0 Dubovsky. 4.30 Sandy Reef. 5.0 Herradura. 5.30 Wang Feihong.

3.0 BABY BOY (B) M. Penson 8-7
4.0 Dubovsky. 4.30 Sandy Reef. 5.0 Herradura. 5.30 Wang Feihong.

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LINGFIELD PARK
(Televised (BBC1) 2.15, 2.45, 3.15, 3.45)

GOING: firm
Draw: Up to 1m high numbers best

2.15 TENDER KING MAIDEN STAKES (2-y-o; £2,945; 5f) (11 runners)

1-2-3-4 AND ALFA (B) M. Penson 8-7
2-5-6 BABY BOY (B) M. Penson 8-7
3-4-5 KHAMATURIAN M. Penson 8-7
1-2-3-4 KHAMATURIAN M. Penson 8-7
1-2-3-4 KHAMATURIAN M. Penson 8-7
1-2-3-4 KHAMATURIAN M. Penson 8-7

2.15 TENDER KING MAIDEN STAKES (2-y-o; £2,945; 5f) (11 runners)

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Lingfield selections
By Maudslayi
2.15 Overturn. 2.45 Miami Prince. 3.15 Rowa. 3.45 SERHEED (nap).

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2.15 Overturn. 2.45 Miami Prince. 3.15 Rowa. 3.45 SERHEED (nap).

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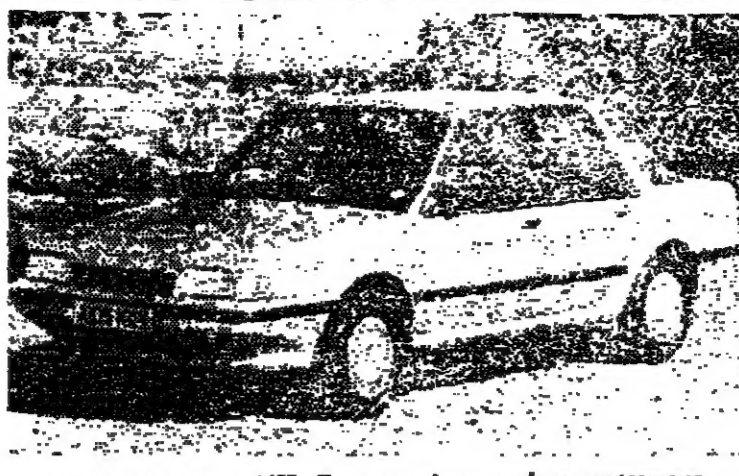
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Car Buyer's Guide

Motoring by Clifford Webb

Lessons to be learnt from Fiat's robots



Austin Montego 1.6HL: Roomy and economic on motorways

Fiat's Cassino car plant in the beautiful valley below the bloody 1939-45 war battlefield of Monte Cassino is attracting a great deal of attention from the international motor industry these days. There are many lessons to be learnt from the Italian giant's attempt to rectify the mistakes it made 12 years ago when, under pressure from the government, it opened a satellite car plant in the depressed Mezzogiorno region of Southern Italy.

Like the other northern based Italian car maker, Alfa Romeo, which was persuaded to open a factory at Pomigliano, near Naples, Fiat got its priorities wrong. Instead of producing cars by the most cost-effective methods of the day it created as many jobs as possible for a labour force composed of seasonal agricultural workers who were alien to the disciplines demanded by a car factory.

The problems which created in terms of absenteeism and strikes have been too well documented to repeat here. Fiat (and Alfa Romeo) were trying to change a way of life that had existed unchanged for hundreds of years. But by the start of the 1980s they seemed to be making marginally efficient car workers out of men more used to operating crude olive oil presses.

There still remained, however, the problem of over-employment. In 1980 10,000 Cassino workers produced 1,200 cars a day. Today 6,200 workers are turning out 1,300 cars a day.

Two factors made this possible. The most immediate impact came from the Italian system of "cassa integrazione", under which surplus employees are sent home and paid 80 per cent of their normal wages. In 1980, 2,700 Cassino employees were made redundant in this way. Four years later 1,000 of them are still without a job and receiving about £350 a month from the "cassa", which is jointly funded by the government and public companies.

The second factor was the modernization of the relative new plant so that the entire welding and painting of vehicle bodies is now done by unmanned machinery. The only humans seen in many areas at Cassino are maintenance and quality specialists.

The situation for international visitors is Robogate, Fiat's answer to the traditional endless track. It uses computer controlled wheeled carriers to trundle bodies from one automated work station to the next, along an unseen magnetic track in the floor.

Robogate was first introduced some six years ago at Fiat's Rivolta plant near Turin and led to the now famous "Untouched by human hand" advertising campaign for the Ritmo (known in Britain as the Strada).

Extravagant claims were made at that time for the system's remark-

able cost-effectiveness, and it was suggested that no car maker could afford not to follow Fiat's example. In fact, very few did and even those manufacturers have used such heavily modified versions that they bear little resemblance to the original, which suffers from the space taken up by the carriers. If placed end to end the 60 carriers at Cassino would need as much space as a large goods train.

Robogate's contribution to the next generation of car making, however, is its extreme flexibility. It lends itself to the production of more than one model on the same manufacturing facilities. Cassino can switch between the new Regalia medium saloon and the smaller Ritmo within hours or produce a mixture of the two. And flexibility to react to fast changing demand is the name of the game in today's motor industry. With so much surplus capacity in Europe today the car makers are no longer in the numbers game. They are using that surplus to reduce reaction time and make what the customer wants, not what manufacturers believe he should have.

Robogate has also been refined and improved in the past six years to the extent that it has reduced the number of man hours required to produce a Ritmo by 30 per cent.

More than half the production costs at Cassino are workers' wages and most of these are employed in the last stronghold of human labour, the final trim and assembly line. So far the complex number of jobs carried out there have defied the march of the robot. But its days are also numbered according to Ing. Aldo Vignale, Cassino's young plant director. He predicts that within three years a new generation of cars designed for final assembly by robots will reduce manning levels "quite significantly".

Montego on test

Now that all the fuss is dying down after the launch of Austin Rover's Montego it is the appropriate time to take a more considered view of that most important new

replacement Sierra has failed to do. On the road it is immediately apparent that Montego is the best medium-priced riding car yet built by Austin Rover. It even matches much more expensive Rover saloons with a softer ride than its half brother, Maestro, giving the impression more of a French than a British car.

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The additional development work is obvious in its refinement being noticeably quicker and smoother than the R series. It is also a first-time starter which gets into its stride without the hesitation and grumbles of some of its rivals.

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Driven in strange conditions, a right-hand-drive car in a keep left country, and with too much effort directed to not getting lost, it is hardly the ideal setting for a careful assessment.

On the other hand I appreciate the need for manufacturers to go south at that time of year to ensure that months of careful and costly planning are not jeopardized by the snow and ice which can and do assault these islands in March.

But to do justice to any car it needs to be driven several times over a familiar test route, including daily commuting to the office. I then have a direct comparison with the performance, ride and road holding of competitive cars driven over the same terrain.

The model chosen for testing last week was the Montego 1.6. I would have preferred the anticipated big seller, the 1.6i, but had to settle for the more fully equipped 1.6HL.

The first thing that has to be said about Montego is that it is a big car at a shade under 15ft long and gives the appearance of being even bigger. It is also eye-catching with its fluted side panels and graceful slimline headlights.

A burst wave main on the London North Circular road trapped me in a huge traffic jam and demonstrated its appeal. In no time drivers were queuing their cars for a closer look at the Montego.

They were all complimentary except one astute character who said flatly, "It is another Corina". He was trying to be disparaging but Austin Rover's chairman, Mr Harold Musgrove, would have loved him for his choice of words. He would like nothing better than for Montego to step into Corina's profitable shoes, a task which the

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On the other hand I appreciate the need for manufacturers to go south at that time of year to ensure that months of careful and costly planning are not jeopardized by the snow and ice which can and do assault these islands in March.

But to do justice to any car it needs to be driven several times over a familiar test route, including daily commuting to the office. I then have a direct comparison with the performance, ride and road holding of competitive cars driven over the same terrain.

The model chosen for testing last week was the Montego 1.6. I would have preferred the anticipated big seller, the 1.6i, but had to settle for the more fully equipped 1.6HL.

The first thing that has to be said about Montego is that it is a big car at a shade under 15ft long and gives the appearance of being even bigger. It is also eye-catching with its fluted side panels and graceful slimline headlights.

A burst wave main on the London North Circular road trapped me in a huge traffic jam and demonstrated its appeal. In no time drivers were queuing their cars for a closer look at the Montego.

They were all complimentary except one astute character who said flatly, "It is another Corina".

He was trying to be disparaging but Austin Rover's chairman, Mr Harold Musgrove, would have loved him for his choice of words. He would like nothing better than for Montego to step into Corina's profitable shoes, a task which the

replaced Sierra has failed to do.

On the road it is immediately apparent that Montego is the best medium-priced riding car yet built by Austin Rover. It even matches much more expensive Rover saloons with a softer ride than its half brother, Maestro, giving the impression more of a French than a British car.

But unlike many of them it does not roll excessively on fast bends. True, it does not corner with the "on rails" ability of some but is sure, safe and quite pleasant to handle.

The new 1.6 engine is such a significant improvement of the R series from which it is derived that owners of R series equipped Maestros will rightly feel aggrieved. In fairness to Austin Rover, however, it should be said that the new engine has also been fitted to Maestros since March.

The additional development work is obvious in its refinement

being noticeably quicker and smoother than the R series. It is also a first-time starter which gets into its stride without the hesitation and grumbles of some of its rivals.

It revs eagerly but becomes rather breathless and thrashy at over 4,500 rpm. However the ratios in the five-speed VW gearbox are well-matched to its torque curve and the lack of urge at higher revs is only noticeable when pushing the car to the limit.

The trend-setting new light pressure belts attracted my interest in France for their added comfort on a long run. However it is not until you have experienced the actual lack of restriction across the lap and chest that you appreciate what a difference the lighter recoil springs and slippery belt material make to more relaxed driving.

Montego is a roomy car with more leg room at front and rear than both the Sierra and the Cavalier. It also has the largest boot together with an extension in the boot lid between the lamp clusters to ease loading of awkward or heavy luggage.

Montego is an economical motorway car, thanks to its high

overdrive fifth gear. As an indicated 90mph it is only turning over at 3,000 rpm. On mixture of fast motorway and more leisurely commuting I returned an overall consumption of 36 mpg.

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Today's television and radio programmes

Edited by Peter Dear

BBC 1

00.00 **Coastal AM**. News headlines, weather, traffic and sports bulletins. Also available to viewers with television sets without television facilities.

00.30 **Breakfast Time** with **Selma Scott** and **Mike Smith**. News from Debbie Fox at 6.30, 7.00, 7.30, 8.00 and 8.30 with headlines on the quarter hours; sport at 6.40 and 7.40; regional news, weather and traffic at 6.45, 7.15, 7.45 and 8.15; television preview at 8.55; a review of the morning newspapers at 7.15 and 8.15; gardening hints between 7.30 and 7.45; pop music news between 8.30 and 8.00.

00.30 **MacLeod in Japan**. This morning he is one of the 5,000 crowd-gone-eyed at the sight of two 25 stone Sumo wrestlers hugging the breath out of one another (1.30).

00.30 **News After Noon** with **Richard Whitmore** and **Frances Coverdale**. The weather prospects come from Jim Bacon 12.30 Regional News (London SE only). Financial report followed by news headlines with subtitles.

00.30 **Pebble Mill at One** includes a dahlia growers' competition; Chinese families walking on stilts; and music from **Moira Anderson** 1.45 Heads and Tails. A See Saw programme for the very young (1).

00.30 **Racing from Lingfield**. Julian Wilson introduces coverage of the **Tender King Stakes** (2.15); the **Warner Holidays Stakes** (2.45); the **East Bookmakers Oaks** (3.15) and the **Tender Heart Stakes** (3.45). 3.53 Regional news (not London).

00.30 **Play School**, presented by **Janet Jenson** 4.15 **Six Classic Fairy Tales**. Sheila Hancock with the tale of **Rapunzel** 4.25 **The Record Breakers**. Roy Castle presents another selection of exemplary feats (1.45) **So You Want to Be Top**. Everything you want to know about school survival (1.50) **Code Name School**. Episode three of the five-part drama about missile sabotage (1).

00.30 **Sixty Minutes** begins with the news read by **Jan Leeming**; followed by weather at 5.54; regional news, pictures or music (5.55); and ending with news headlines at 6.30.

00.30 **The Pink Panther Show**. Three cartoons (1).

00.30 **Odd One Out**. Five contestants challenge last week's winner in a series of questions to find which word, picture or music clue is different from the rest. **Pam Daniels** is the presenter.

00.30 **Fame, Sandy Bailey**, a former pupil of the **High School for the Performing Arts**, rusticated because of a drink problem, returns to the fold but soon slips back into his old habits.

00.30 **The Time of Your Life**. **Noel Edmonds** re-creates a memorable month from the swinging 60s.

00.30 **News with John Humphrys**. **Stargate and Hoot**. The intergalactic policemen disguise themselves as heroin dealers when on the trail of a drug ring (1).

00.30 **Pinokio's Progress**. Comedy series about the staff of a minor public school (1). News headlines and weather.

00.30 **Film: The Boss's Son** (1978) starring **Alan Bates**, **Rita Moreno** and **Rudy Solid**. Fresh from college, armed with a business degree, young **Bobby Ross** learns the hard way about life in his father's carpet mill. Directed by **Bobby Roth**. Ends at 12.25.

TV-am

00.30 **Good Morning Britain** presented by **Ante Diamond** and **Nick Owen**. News from **Gordon Howcombe** at 6.30, 7.00, 7.30, 8.00, 8.30 and 9.00; sport at 6.35 and 7.35; the weekend's best buys at 6.40 and 8.45; angling advice at 6.45; the day's anniversaries at 7.05 and 8.05; Popsy cartoon at 7.25; guest of the day, **Judy Lee**, at 7.40 and 8.15; pop video at 7.55; **Jeni Barnett's** post bag at 8.20; **Jimmy Greaves's** week and television highlights at 8.35; **Beauty spot** at 8.55.

ITV/LONDON

00.30 **Thames news headlines**. 9.30 **For Schools**. The natural history of a **Derbyshire Dale**. 9.50 **History in a country church**. 10.05 **A child suffering from spina bifida**. 10.25 **The use of adverbs**. 10.45 **A-level chemistry**. 11.05 **English**, part one of the drama, **Izzy**, by **Jan Mark**. 11.22 **Part two of the Indian legend, the Golden Antelope**. 11.40 **Reproduction and human relationships**. 11.55 **Weston Watson**. Cartoon series. 12.00 **Allie Aldiss**. 12.10 **Rainbow**. Learning with puppets. 12.30 **On the Market**. **Susan Brookes** and **Trevor Hyslop** with the weekend's best food buys.

1.00 **News with Leonard Parkin**. 1.20 **Thames news from Robin Houston**. 1.30 **About Britain**. **Archibuteo Mike Jenner** explores the glories of **Bath**. 1.40 **Look Who's Talking**. With **Derek Buxley** is **entertainer Leslie Crowther** (1).

2.30 **Return of the Saint**. **Smooth Simon** tries to trace an odd chap who threatens to blow up London if he is not **quilted in public** (1). 3.30 **Sons and Daughters**.

4.00 **Rainbow**. A repeat of the programme shown at 12.10. 4.20 **Autbury**. 4.25 **The Wind in the Willows**. More delightful adventures based on the **Kenneth Grahame** characters. 4.55 **Freemtime**. Ideas for young people with time on their hands. 5.15 **The Young Doctors**.

5.45 **News**. 8.00 **The Six O'Clock News** with **Michael Aspel**. 8.10 **The Pyramid Game**. Two members of the public contestants are joined by **Victoria Wood** and **John Junik** in a fast-moving test of powers of description.

7.30 **Hardcastle and McCormick**. The illustrated detective comic figures find themselves pitted against a suave and sophisticated thief.

8.30 **That's My Boy**. Comedy series starring **Mollie Sugden** as the possessive mother of her now-adult son abandoned as a child (Oracle titles page 170).

8.00 **Marlowe - Private Eye**. The iconic lawman fights corruption at **City Hall** and immediately becomes a hunted man. Who is that trying to kill him? **Starring** **Robert Dwyer** (Oracle titles page 170).

10.00 **News**. 10.30 **The London Programme**. Investigates private homes for the poor. Enquiries over the past year have revealed instances of old people being abused and exploited.

11.00 **Shoot Pool**. Another round of the best-of-five series tournament for the **John Bull Bitter London Pool Championship**.

12.00 **South of Watford**. **Ben Elton** with a wry look at the life of **Londoners**.

12.30 **Highway Patrol**. Vintage crime series starring **Broderick Crawford** (1) followed by **Night Thoughts** from **Deaconess Helen Starns**.

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Dr Judy Greenwood: Sex Matters (Channel 4 10.30pm)

00.30 **Open University: Maths Modelling**. **Knobs** 8.55 **Introduction to Sociology** 8.55 **Images: The Third Dimension** 7.25 **Chemical Reactions** 7.45 **Pathways to the Brain**. Ends at 8.10.

9.00 **Daytime on Two**. The economic struggle of the **Great Lake city of Cleveland** 9.25 **Celestia** 3.52 **Sex education for eight-to-10-year olds** 10.15 **Lesley Judd** with ideas on how to reduce fat intake 10.40 **Houses: The Solution**.

10.45 **Celestia** 11.00 **Art projects** about their community by children from **Yorkshire** and **Dorset** 11.22 **Part one of Ian Taylor's Hungry Times**. With subtitles 11.42 **Celestia** 12.05 **Computer studies**.

12.30 **Celestia** 2.01 **Teenage temper** and how it can be controlled 2.30 **Journalism** - with **David Emery** of the **Daily Star** and **John Eckerley** of **Look Now**. Ends at 2.50.

3.00 **Celestia**. 3.05 **Weekend Outlook**. A preview of the weekend's Open University programmes.

5.10 **Broadcast Rituals**. An Open University production that examines the BBC's expertise in the coverage of the great rituals of the nation (1).

5.35 **News summary** with subtitles. 5.40 **Carolan Two**. 5.45 **Film: West of the Pecos** (1925) starring **Robert Mitchum** and **Barbara Hale**. A lively cowboy adventure with **Mitchum** playing the role of a wealthy banker and his attractive daughter who find themselves in the middle of an attack on their ranch. Directed by **Edward Kelly**.

6.50 **Eight Days a Week** presented by **Robin Denslow**. With his guests, **Drummond**, **Aswad** and **Tracie**, **Mr Denslow** takes a critical look at the week's new films, records, videos and concerts.

7.20 **America**. Part three of **Allan Carr's** personal history of his adopted country (1).

8.10 **My Music**. The first of a new series of musical quizzes. 8.35 **Gardeners' World**. **Geoff Hamilton** prepares and sows a lawn; **Anne Mayo** takes bulbs after flowering; and **Betty Matcalf** has new ideas about cultivating French beans and tomatoes.

8.00 **Empire**. The first of a new comedy series of broadroom farces (see Choice). 9.25 **All Our Working Lives**. Part five of the 11-episode series about Britain at work in the 20th century examines the lot of the aircraft workers (see Choice).

10.25 **Jazz at the Landmark**. The guests are blues singer, **Jimmy Witherspoon** with **Danny Moss** and his Quartet. 10.55 **Newswatch**. The final programme of the series about urban forces (1). Ends at 12.05.

1.00 **Closedown**.

1.15 **The Late Clive James**. Heroes tonight's topic. Talking about their lives as **Tom Stoppard**, **Marina Warner** and **John Wells**.

12.15 **Jazz at the Gateway**. **Oscar Peterson's** guests are **Mike Westbrook's** **Brass Band** and the **Francis Jeannine Quartet**.

1.00 **Closedown**.

● **Patrick McNeel**, the smooth, dapper and ruthless former **Avenger** re-appears on British television tonight as the smooth, dapper and ruthless **Avenger** in a new imported American comedy series, **EMPIRE** (BBC 9.00pm). Set in the head offices of a giant international conglomerate, ruled through fear by chairman **Cromwell** (anxiety breeds excellence), the six part series gets off to a cracking start with the board directors being thrown into various states of panic by the calling of an emergency board meeting. **Paranoia** rules as the reasons for this meeting are mulled over by the directors - privately, a bunch of nervous wrecks, publicly, brimming over with confidence and confidence into this plan of a tank of vice president is hurtled the latest of their number, one **Ben Christman**, a neophyte in the world of big business, promoted to

the board from his research laboratory at the behest of **Cromwell**. Immediately treated with disdain by the rest of the board he later becomes the subject of their hilarious unsees. As with all the best American comedy the episodes are comparatively short and the timing of the delivery of the dialogue is perfect - two plusses that auger well for the remaining five episodes.

● **Yorkshire Television's** controversial series, **SEX MATTERS** (Channel 4 10.30pm) has found itself in censorship troubles even before it has been screened. Part one, which should have been shown tonight, has been withdrawn to be bowdlerized and will be seen in its re-cut state as programme number six. In its place tonight is part two.

● **Caryl Phillips**, in the final programme of the series **THE SPORTING LIFE** (Radio 4, 4.10pm), examines Sport and the Black Community. Why is it, Mr Phillips asks, that some sports attract black people while others remain the domain of the whites? Is society's attitude to black athletes a reflection of what society thinks of all blacks? Mr Phillips searches deep for the answers.

● **News: Our Mutual Friend** (1) by **Charles Dickens** (1). 4.00 **News: Time for Verse** (1). 4.10 **The Sporting Life**. Seven programmes on the sporting scene in Britain (1) Sport and the Black Community.

4.40 **Story Time: "Time After Time"** by **Moby Kean** (last of 12 parts). 5.00 **Phil: News Magazine**. 5.50 **Shipping Forecast**. 5.55 **Weather: Programme News**. 6.00 **The Six O'Clock News: Financial Report**.

6.30 **Gang Places**. The world of transport and travel. 7.00 **News**. 7.05 **The Archers**. 7.20 **Pick of the Week** (1). **Programme News**. 7.30 **Profile: A personal portrait**. 8.45 **Any Questions?** From the **European Parliament Building**, **Brussels**. With **Christopher Tugendhat**, vice-president of the **European Commission**, **Robin Cook**, **M.P.** **Deputy** of the **European Parliament**, **Lord** **Marking** **Board** and **Nigel**, **Hague** **member** of the **European Parliament**.

9.30 **Letter from America** by **Alastair MacIntyre**. 9.45 **Kaleidoscope**. Arts magazine. 10.15 **A Book at Bedtime: Against the Stream** by **James Hanley** (1). 11.00 **The Financial World Tonight**. 11.30 **Week Ending**. A statistical review of the week's news. 12.00 **News**. 12.10 **Weather**. 12.15 **Cross**, shipping forecast.

ENGLAND: VHF with 11 above except: 6.25-6.30 am **Weather**; 6.35-6.45 **For Schools**; 6.50-7.00 **Capitain Club** No 1. 11.5 **Music Workshop**. 11.55-12.05 **See For Yourself**. 12.05-12.15 **For Schools**. 2.00-2.30 **For Schools**. 2.30-2.55 **Join In**. 2.55-3.05 **See For Yourself**. 3.05-3.15 **For Schools**. 3.15-3.30 **Join In**. 3.30-3.45 **See For Yourself**. 3.45-4.00 **For Schools**. 4.00-4.15 **Join In**. 4.15-4.30 **See For Yourself**. 4.30-4.45 **For Schools**. 4.45-5.00 **Join In**. 5.00-5.15 **See For Yourself**. 5.15-5.30 **For Schools**. 5.30-5.45 **Join In**. 5.45-6.00 **See For Yourself**. 6.00-6.15 **For Schools**. 6.15-6.30 **Join In**. 6.30-6.45 **See For Yourself**. 6.45-7.00 **For Schools**. 7.00-7.15 **Join In**. 7.15-7.30 **See For Yourself**. 7.30-7.45 **For Schools**. 7.45-8.00 **Join In**. 8.00-8.15 **See For Yourself**. 8.15-8.30 **For Schools**. 8.30-8.45 **Join In**. 8.45-9.00 **See For Yourself**. 9.00-9.15 **For Schools**. 9.15-9.30 **Join In**. 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12.00-12.15 **For Schools**. 12.15-12.30 **Join In**. 12.

WPC Fletcher – unlawfully killed by embassy bullet

By Michael Horsnell

Commander William Huckleby, head of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch, said yesterday that investigations into the murder of Woman Police Constable Fletcher would continue and that 400 lines of inquiry were being pursued.

He was speaking after a jury at Westminster coroner's court found that WPC Fletcher, aged 25, was unlawfully killed outside the Libyan People's Bureau in London on April 17.

After a 90-minute retirement the jury of five men and five women found WPC died from a gunshot wound to the abdomen caused by a bullet fired from one of two windows on the building's first floor at about 10.20 am.

Commander Huckleby said inquiries included tracing the origin of guns allegedly found by the Libyans in the British embassy in Tripoli, for which serial numbers had been provided by a Libyan news agency, and continuing forensic tests on the weapons found at the bureau in London.

More than 100 people have been interviewed and 200 statements obtained.

After the inquest, at which 24 witnesses gave evidence, Mr Ian Walker, a solicitor for the Police Federation representing the Fletcher family, said: "At the moment I have no instructions from the family as to whether they want to take matters further but a claim against the Libyans is an option they may look at."

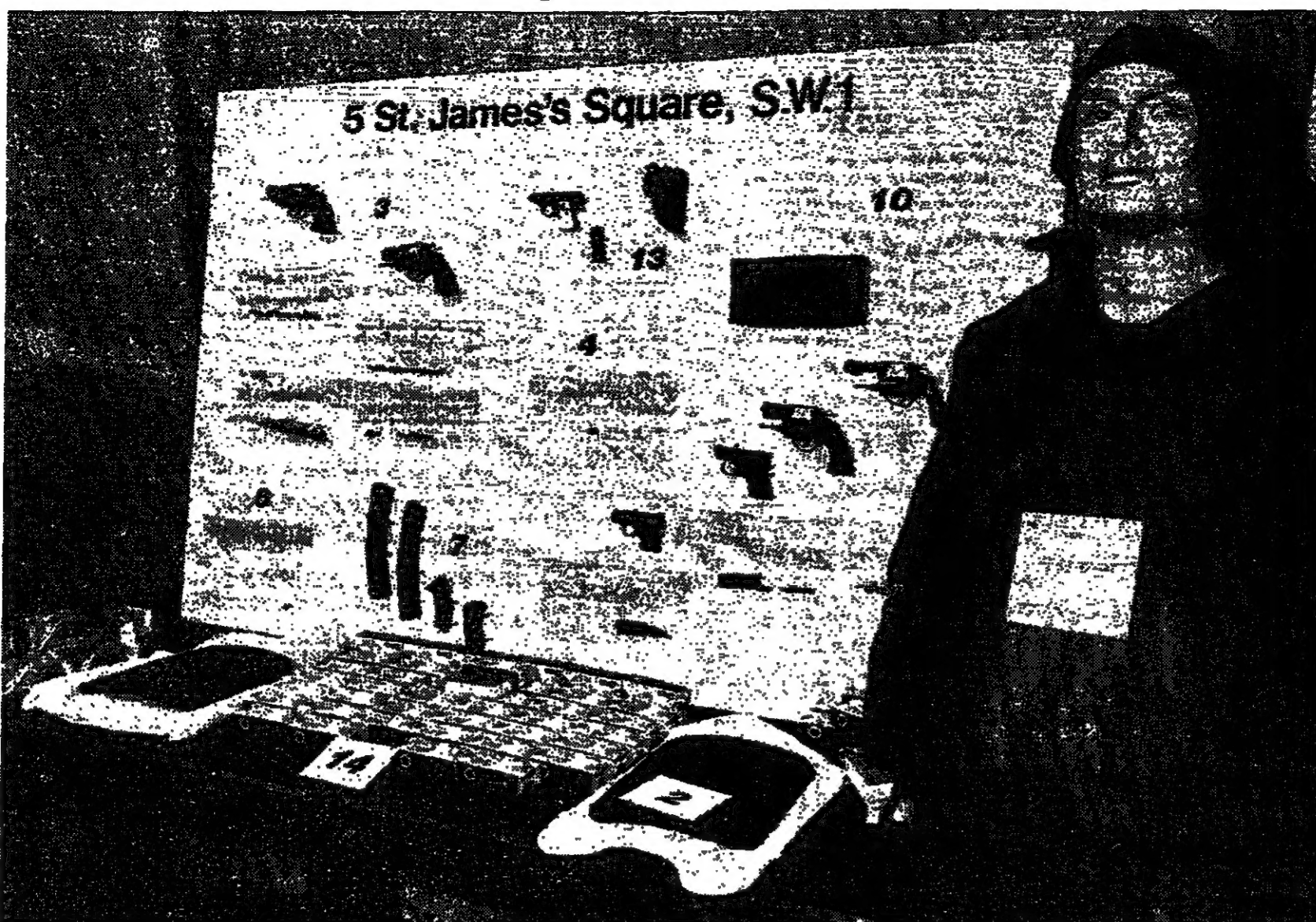
There is also the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to be considered and there may be other remedies which may be pursued.

It emerged yesterday that the Police Memorial Trust, established to commemorate police officers killed in the course of duty, intends to put up a memorial to WPC Fletcher.

WPC Fletcher's injuries were so severe that no medical intervention could have saved her and she died in hospital just over two hours after being hit. Dr Iain West, consultant forensic pathologist at St Thomas's Hospital Medical School, told the inquest.

He said she died from an abdominal wound having been shot in the right side of the back by a bullet striking her from a 60-degree angle. The bullet entered her liver, struck her spine, severed the pancreas, re-entered the liver and started to "tumble" before emerging at the junction of the chest and abdomen. It ruptured the main vein.

The bullet pierced her tunic lining as it came to rest and is believed to have been the one



Arms cache: Guns and ammunition from the Libyan People's Bureau displayed yesterday. They included sets of armour, placed here on a dummy, two 38 Cobra Colt revolvers, a 9mm Parabellum spent cartridge case found by a window in the building and sub-machine gun parts (Photograph: Peter Trivier)

found in the ambulance which took her to hospital.

The shot was obviously fired from the bureau's first or second floor, he said. The bullet was a 9mm fired from a sub-machinegun and WPC Fletcher may have been the first victim to be hit.

Mr Robin Keely, a police forensic scientist, said tests showed guns were fired from two windows in the ambassador's large general waiting room where firearms residue was found.

Commander Huckleby said the 30 Libyans escorted from the bureau at the end of the 10-day siege to Sunningdale were questioned by police who established their identity. Then they were flown to Tripoli.

A four-day search of the building starting on April 30 revealed 4,367 rounds of

ammunition, four 38 revolvers, three self-loading pistols with loading magazines, Sterling sub-machinegun magazines, body armour and bomb blankets.

He had no evidence to identify positively two of the 30 people released from the bureau as responsible for the shooting.

All 30 remained suspects. The police had no warning before the shooting, he added.

In answer to a question from Mr Walker, he said 22 of the 30 had diplomatic status sufficient to protect them from prosecution.

Mr Brian Arnold, a forensic scientist, said the bullet which killed WPC Fletcher came from a Sterling sub-machinegun but two such weapons were almost certainly fired. The simultaneous firing of these could sound like the more rapid-firing Ingram sub-machinegun which

a police witness told the inquest on Wednesday that he thought he had heard.

Mr Arnold said he knew of no weapon other than the Sterling which produced the type of mark his examination revealed from the bullet found in the ambulance.

Last night anti-terrorist squad officers said one of the guns found in the Bureau could have been used by assassins who killed Mr Mohammed Ramadan, a Libyan journalist, outside the Regent's Park mosque in April 1980.

Britain has allowed 197 Libyans into the country since April 17. Mr David Waddington, Minister of State at the Home Office, said in the Commons. Most were returning from short visits abroad and had visas issued before April 17, he said. Parliament, page 4

Letter from the Alamo

Treasured symbol of Texan spirit

It is 97 degrees, a brutal spring day even for south Texas. The bleached-white walls of the mission, San Antonio de Valero are hot as coals.

It is cool inside where the Daughters of the Republic of Texas are showing off a couple of Davy Crockett's rifles and a collection of old Colts and Winchester.

This is a shrine, a place revered in the romance and legend of Texas. This is the Alamo, where Texas had its making, and 187 Americans died fighting for their state's independence from Mexico in 1836. It is crumbling very slowly, very mysteriously, into dust.

It is a building of dubious historical authenticity. Nobody tells you that the chapel, the principal building, has had 10 new roofs over the years, or that the famous facade did not exist when the place was a Christian Mission – that adornment was built by the United States Army when it turned the place into a fort. They painted it battleship grey.

And the building that houses the museum came along in the 1930s as part of a public works programme during the Depression, though there is no sign telling you so.

Despite these and other historical imperfections, the Alamo is a treasured symbol of the dogged spirit of Texas. The decay of the little that remains of the old structure eats at the very heart of a state so totally enraptured by itself and by its history.

Nobody is quite sure why the walls are crumbling. It may be the effects of underground water seepage, or the result of chemical damage from previous preservation measures. The Daughters of the Republic of Texas, who protect the shrine under a legislative fiat of 1903, have engaged experts to isolate the cause.

The Daughters raise funds by selling junk in a tourists' shop. There is no entrance fee. The Alamo (the name is from the Spanish for whitewood tree) is bang in the middle of San Antonio and is under constant siege by buses, ice cream men and hawkers of all manner of rubbish. Thanks to the 1960 John Wayne epic, it is a tourist spot.

The Daughters' stewardship of the Alamo is often criticized by those who would like to

turn it into a commercial going concern, as well as by historical purists. High on one wall, for example, is a picture depicting the battle of El Alamo – but Davy Crockett looks distinctly like John Wayne surrounded by a heap of dead bodies. He is backed up by look-alikes of Richard Widmark and Laurence Harvey. Such pandering to populism make historians wince but the Daughters say that children like it.

Many a person has produced new ideas to turn the Alamo into a business venture but the Daughters are resistant to changing its present character – a low-key, low-budget museum and shrine with the minimum of gimmickry.

The latest businessman with a package of proposals is Mr Gary Foreman, a history buff from Illinois. He is waging a campaign against the Daughters, appealing directly to civic leaders with his ideas for "multimedia presentations of historical subjects" – what most of us know as *son et lumière*.

He says the real failure of the Daughters is in not giving visitors any concept of the real size of the old Alamo or its predecessor, the Mission San Antonio de Valero, which began in 1718 to turn local Indians into Christians (in fact the biggest achievement of the missionaries was to introduce measles and chicken pox, which eventually wiped out most of the local Indian population).

Mrs Kellis Dibrell, the Alamo committee chairman for the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, said adamantly: "We were given instructions by the legislature not to create a battlefield but to create a shrine in memory of 187 men who died here. It is a shrine, not a tourist thing."

And she said that any attempt to extend the present four-and-a-half acre site to anything like its original size would be impossible.

No doubt the Daughters will successfully fight off Mr Foreman in their determination to keep the Alamo a shrine, simple monument. Their toughest overriding battle is to halt the ravages to the ancient walls, to save them as a monument to the spirit of Texas.

Christopher Thomas

British Greens prepare election battle lines

By David Cross

The British Ecology Party, which is fielding 15 candidates in the forthcoming European elections, yesterday unveiled a campaign manifesto designed to turn the EEC into a European Ecological Community.

At a press conference in London, leaders of the party said that fundamental changes were required to the Treaty of Rome to transform the EEC into a federation of regions rather than a grouping of nation states. The party's manifesto was drawn up as a joint campaign platform for all the Green parties in Europe, including the powerful West German contingent.

The 16-page document entitled "Towards a Green Europe" pinpoints five key areas in which the ecological parties of Europe seek modifications to the Treaty of Rome. These are peace, environment, work, energy and agriculture.

None of them stands a chance of being elected under Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system – a major bone of contention.

THE TIMES INFORMATION SERVICE

Today's events

Royal engagements
Princess Anne, Patron of the Royal Lympington Yacht Club, attend the Royal Lympington Club Match Racing Championships, 11; and later attends a Charity Premiere of *West Side Story* in aid of Richmond Fellowship, at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, 8.15.
Princess Margaret, as President, attends the annual general meeting of the Royal Scottish Society for the

Prevention of Cruelty to Children in the City Chambers, Edinburgh.
The Duke of Gloucester attends the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland's Conference and reception at Albany Hotel, Glasgow, 9.30.
The Duchess of Kent, as Chancellor, will preside at the Congregation for the Conferment of Honorary Degrees at the University of Leeds, 4.25; and later attend dinner for honorary graduates at University House, Leeds, 8.
The Duke of Kent, as President of the Royal National Lifeboat

Institution, visits the lifeboat station at Arbroath, 10.
Princess Alexandra, as President, attends the 210th Annual General Court of the Royal Humane Society at the Mansion House, 2.45.
New exhibitions
Paintings and other works – Paul Kelly, and Recent sculpture by Doug Cocker, both exhibitions at Artspace Galleries, 21 Castle St. Aberdeen; Mon to Sat 10 to 5.30 (closed Sun – both end June 6).
Paintings by Simon Cook Blake Gallery, Georges Lane, Crowthorne, Somerset; Mon to Sat 10 to 4 closed Sun – ends May 26).

Food prices

Of the numerous apples available from New Zealand, the Cape, Chile, France, Italy, Canada and the United States and our own stored fruit, the one with the most interesting background appears to be the New Zealand Gala. A cross-bred Delicious and Cox, the result crossed with Golden Delicious, it sells around 40-52 a pound, which is quite expensive, but then good breeding does not come cheap. Cape Grapes are good value at 60-70p a lb and there are early peaches from Israel at 15-25p each.

Salted ingredients are more plentiful with round, English and Dutch lettuce from 30-36p a head and Cos, Webbs and Crispas at 30-40p a head. Spring onions retail at 20-26p a bunch, water cress at 24-26p a bunch and good house tomatoes at 60-85p a lb. Asparagus is widely available in the shops now from Spain, the United States and Hungary, as well as our own, which is the best. English Asparagus is 90p a lb, depending on thickness.

Beef prices show little change, a few bargains may be found on the cheaper cuts. Home-produced lamb is still expensive, ranging from £1.65 to £2.50 for a whole leg; £1 to £1.60 for shoulder, and loin chops are £1.80 to £2.84 a lb. Pork prices are stable apart from loin chops, up a penny a lb. It seems strange, then, that bacon wholesalers are going up by a further 54p a tonne next week, on top of the £30 a tonne two weeks ago. Some good buys for this weekend are Tesco's New Zealand lamb shoulder at 68p a lb.

The papers

The Daily Mirror points out the discrepancy between Patrick Jenkin's claim that the Prime Minister may soon visit Liverpool and her office's denial. It says: "That would be a pity. The Liverpool has only been there once in five years. It is time she went again. Time to look at the appalling unemployment problem and at the thousands of youngsters there who have never worked and have little prospect of ever doing so. Time to see the local council who are threatening to break the law and bring in a budget which could bankrupt the city because they can't face up to the alternative. It is also time she looked again at what her government is doing to destroy local councils, including the abolition of Merseyside's Metropolitan Council, for no better reason than that they are Labour-controlled."

Top films

Top box office films in London:
1 (1) *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes*
2 (1) *The Dead Zone*
3 (2) *Yentl*
4 (2) *Terms of Endearment*
5 (4) *Silverado*
6 (5) *Footloose*
7 (6) *Swarm in Love*
8 (3) *The Trouble with Harry*
9 (7) *Educating Rita*
10 (8) *Educating Rita*
Top five in the provinces:
1 *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes*
2 *Terms of Endearment*
3 *Footloose*
4 *Yentl*
5 *Educating Rita*
Compiled by Screen International

Roads

London and South-east M3: A new contraflow system starts today along the Surrey section of the motorway. The north-bound carriageway will be accommodating two-way traffic between junctions 4 (Frimley) and junction 3 (Lightwater). In addition the entry slip road on to south-bound carriageway at junction 3 will be closed. Expect contraflow and approach with care. Midlands A34: Roadworks at Tidmington, S of Shipston, Warwickshire. M1: Contraflow between junctions 16 and 18 (Watford Gap, M45 junction); serious delays.

Wales and West A4: Lane restriction in Hotwell Road, and from Anchor Road/St Georges Road, Bristol, Avon: no right turn into Jacobs Wells Road, A390, at the junction with Truro Road W of West Taphouse, Cornwall; temporary lights, and at Proboscis, A470 Cardiff to Merthyr road at North Road flyover in Cardiff.

Scotland: A82: Stop/go boards in Criff Road, west of Perth City boundary, Perthshire, A737: Out-side lane closed on both carriageways at Ferguise, E of Fulbar Road, Paisley, M80: Northbound carriageway closed at M9 junction 9, Suirring diversion operates via the slip roads.

Information supplied by AA.

The pound

	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	1.58	1.59
Austria Sch	28.30	26.70
Belgium Fr	82.00	78.00
Canada \$	1.84	1.77
Denmark Kr	14.56	13.86
Finland Mk	8.36	7.96
France Fr	122.13	116.63
Germany DM	3.96	3.78
Greece Dr	156.59	146.59
Hong Kong \$	11.75	11.15
Ireland £	1.29	1.23
Italy Lira	2450.00	2350.00
Japan Yen	331.00	315.00
Netherlands Gld	4.48	4.26
Norway Kr	11.28	10.73
Portugal Esc	200.00	190.00
South Africa Rd	2.24	2.08
Spain Pes	217.75	206.75
Sweden Kr	11.75	11.15
Switzerland Fr	3.28	3.11
USA \$	1.42	1.37
Yugoslavia Dnr	209.00	189.00

Retail Price Index 345.1.
London: The FT index closed 11.3 down at 844.9.

Parliament today

Commons (9.30): Debate on policing in London.

Weather forecast

A ridge of high pressure will become established across the British Isles.

6am to midnight

London, SE, E England, East Angles: Sunny intervals with occasional showers near coasts; wind N or NE moderate to fresh; max temp 11 to 15C (52 to 59F).
Central S, SW England, E Midlands: Channel Islands: Sunny periods; wind NE moderate to fresh; max temp 13 to 15C (55 to 59F).
W Midlands, S, N Wales, NW, central N England: Dry with sunny periods; wind variable light; max temp 13 to 15C (55 to 59F).
Lake District, Isle of Man, NE England, Borders, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, SW Scotland, Glasgow, central Highlands, Inverclyde: Dry with sunny periods; wind variable light; max temp 12 to 14C (54 to 57F).
AE, W Scotland, Argyll, Orkney, Shetland, Northern Ireland: Dry with bright or sunny periods; wind SW light to fresh; max temp 11 to 13F (52 to 55F).
Outlook for tomorrow and Sunday: Mostly dry with sunny intervals but scattered showers in SE. Temperatures near normal.

SEA PASSAGES: North Sea, Straits of Dover: Wind northwesterly moderate to fresh; locally strong later, sea moderate to rough; visibility moderate or fresh. Irish Sea, English Channel (E): Wind northerly moderate or fresh, sea moderate. St Georges Channel: Wind variable light, sea smooth, Irish Sea: Wind variable mainly southerly light, sea smooth.

Sun rises: 5.15 am
Moon sets: 4.07 pm
Full Moon: May 15.

Lighting-up time

London 8.20 pm to 4.43 am
Bristol 8.20 pm to 4.53 am
Edinburgh 8.41 pm to 4.23 am
Manchester 8.27 pm to 5.10 am
Penzance 8.28 pm to 5.10 am

Yesterday

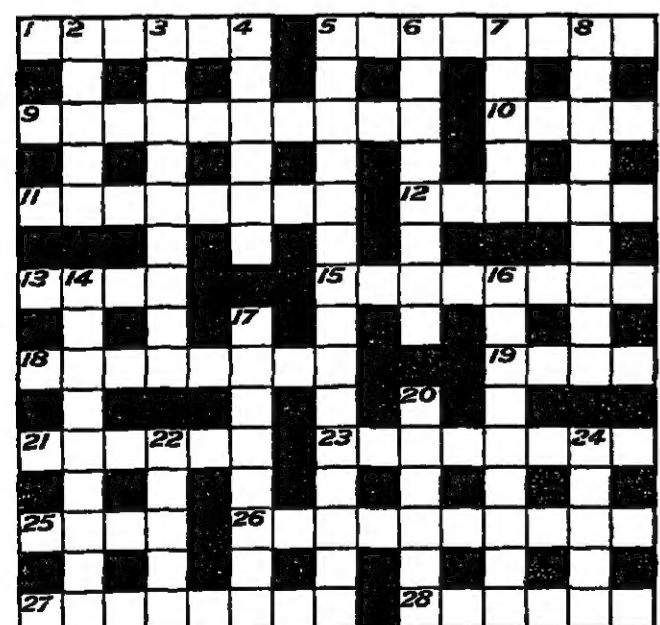
Temperatures at midday yesterday: C, cloud; F, rain; h, rain; a, sun.

Highest and lowest

Yesterday: Highest: dry sunny Glasgow 19.5C; wet 19.0C; low: dry sunny Glasgow 10.0C; wet 10.0C; highest: rain, 12.0C; 0.61in. Highest sunshine: Three, 12.0C.

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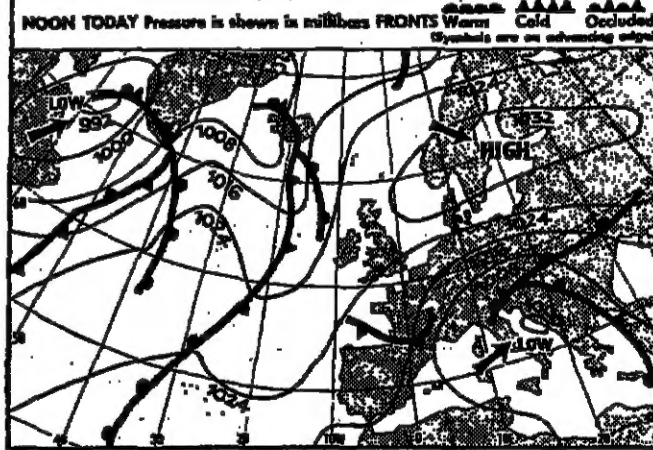
The Times Crossword Puzzle No 16,427



ACROSS

- Boundary maker foiled? (6).
- Spinner loaded to play roulette? (8).
- See fight in the ring – it's seen in court too (7-3).
- Second position in play (4).
- Hold back in arrest medal (6).
- Leaves a fortune here? (6).
- 10 crazy to make this attempt (4).
- Stretch out a gentle round (8).
- Bang on schedule, this (4,4).
- Distinctive air of Petrarch's toady lady (4).
- Astronaut under the typist's thumb? (6).
- Discharge the conclusion of the errand (8).
- Dog to keep moving (4).
- Let down – no tips paid out (10).
- Star pianist covers the country (8).
- 28 Ten to one the French break even (6).
- DOWN
- Napoleon on Elba – a one-time French island (5).
- Artist studies part of Bradshaw (9).

Price Crossword in The Times tomorrow
CONCISE CROSSWORD PAGE 12



High tides

Location	Time	Height
London Bridge	11.21	8.5
Aberdeen	10.28	3.7
Armagh	11.12	5.0
Belfast	10.54	4.7
Birmingham	10.44	4.0
Bristol	10.44	4.0
Cardiff	10.44	4.0
Chelmsford	10.44	4.0
Colchester	10.44	4.0
Durham	10.44	4.0
Exeter	10.44	4.0
Glasgow	10.44	4.0
Harwich	10.44	4.0
Hull	10.44	4.0
Leamington	10.44	4.0
Leeds	10.44	4.0
Liverpool	10.44	4.0
Manchester	10.44	4.0
Newcastle	10.44	4.0
Nottingham	10.44	4.0
Portsmouth	10.44	4.0
Reading	10.44	4.0
Sheffield	10.44	4.0
Southampton	10.44	4.0
Stoke-on-Trent	10.44	4.0
Torquay	10.44	4.0
Walsby	10.44	4.0
Widnes	10.44	4.0

Around Britain

Location	Time	Height
London Bridge	11.21	8.5
Aberdeen	10.28	3.7
Armagh	11.12	5.0
Belfast	10.54	4.7
Birmingham	10.44	4.0
Bristol	10.44	4.0
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Chelmsford	10.44	4.0
Colchester	10.44	4.0
Durham	10.44	4.0
Exeter	10.44	4.0
Glasgow	10.44	4.0
Harwich	10.44	4.0
Hull	10.44	4.0
Leamington	10.44	4.0
Leeds	10.44	4.0
Liverpool	10.44	4.0
Manchester	10.44	4.0
Newcastle	10.44	4.0
Nottingham	10.44	4.0
Portsmouth	10.44	4.0
Reading	10.44	4.0
Sheffield	10.44	4.0
Southampton	10.44	4.0
Stoke-on-Trent	10.44	4.0
Torquay	10.44	4.0
Walsby	10.44	4.0
Widnes	10.44	4.0

Abroad

Location	Time	Height
London Bridge	11.21	8.5
Aberdeen	10.28	3.7
Armagh	11.12	5.0
Belfast	10.54	4.7
Birmingham	10.44	4.0
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Colchester	10.44	4.0
Durham	10.44	4.0
Exeter	10.44	4.0
Glasgow	10.44	4.0
Harwich	10.44	4.0
Hull	10.44	4.0
Leamington	10.44	4.0
Leeds	10.44	4.0
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Manchester	10.44	4.0
Newcastle	10.44	4.0
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Reading	10.44	4.0
Sheffield	10.44	4.0
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Stoke-on-Trent	10.44	4.0
Torquay	10.44	4.0
Walsby	10.44	4.0
Widnes	10.44	4.0